



DELHI UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

DELHI UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY  
SYSTEM

**D.U.P. No. 574-30-7-75-20,000**

## RATAN TATA LIBRARY

(Delhi University Library System)

**(TEXT-BOOK)**

Cl. No. 58

Ac. No. 516046

G3

**Date of release for loan**

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below. An overdue charge of 25 Paise per day will be charged for the first two days and 50 Paise from the third day the book is kept overtime.

A blank grid of 12 columns and 12 rows. A small black dot is located in the bottom-left cell of the grid.





## **INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR**



# INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR

*ESSAYS TOWARD A RE-INTERPRETING  
OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ORGANIZATION*

By

FLOYD HENRY ALLPORT

PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF CITIZENSHIP AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY



GREENWOOD PRESS, PUBLISHERS  
NEW YORK

Originally published in 1933  
by the University of North Carolina Press

First Greenwood Reprinting 1969

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number 71-90460

SBN 8371-2145-0

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**TO MY MOTHER**

*Only communion with whole individuals can  
make an individual whole.*

---

---

## FOREWORD

---

---

ONE WHO devotes oneself to social psychology as a study of the behavior of individuals continually challenges, by implication, the method of those who view it from the standpoint of groups; and such an inquirer must eventually face the issues which these latter are raising. During the past ten years I have been pointing out the inadequacies which seem to me to arise from talking about 'societal' entities, such as groups and institutions, as though they possessed human qualities, causal potency, or characteristics for objective, scientific study. These earlier efforts were not a questioning of whether collective entities exist, but only a plea that we discriminate carefully in the manner in which such concepts are used, that we inquire whether, on certain occasions, a different conception might not reveal truths which are fundamental. In this book I have examined these group approaches more thoroughly, and have tested them not merely by the criterion of scientific method, but by tracing their consequences throughout human relationships and the structure of social organization. And in contrast with the societal view, I have outlined, however inadequately, the beginnings of a new orientation: I have tried to re-interpret both institutions and society in terms of the behavior of individuals.

Readers will recognize in this methodological issue the old problem of the one and the many, a puzzle transmitted from the ancient philosophers and carried by the Schoolmen into the endless ramifications of nominalism and realism. The claim of this problem on my own interest, however, is not one of an historic or academic nature; and its full significance goes beyond these earlier metaphysical speculations. The theory that the 'many,' unified through an ideal or a pattern of organization into the 'one,' is something as real and important as the individuals taken separately involves, in our modern social setting, two consequences of deep significance. It raises first, a question fundamental to



the methods of the human sciences. And secondly, it aids in the secret operation of desires, motives, symbolism, rationalization, and forms of control in a manner which cannot be understood without careful analysis. These effects of group and institutional thinking comprise an important though neglected field for psychological study.

In historical retrospect the device of symbols representing groups and institutions seems fairly obvious. When Cardinal Richelieu, in the drama bearing his name, inscribes about his ward the protective 'circle of Rome,' we are likely to smile at the superstition which made this strategy effective. The record of the conflict over investiture, the 'divine right' theory of kings, and the indulgences granted by the 'Church,' make one wonder no less at the audacity of the lords spiritual and temporal than at the fallibility of the masses. The solid front which the advocates of slavery made to uphold what they called the "South's peculiar institution," is likely to impress a modern reader as another instance of men's ideals gone wrong. And in the juridical tradition to the effect that when twelve men come together to take joint action there are not twelve persons present, but thirteen (the thirteenth being the corporate mind of the group), the collective fiction becomes a bit grotesque. It has an uncanny sound which is unsuited to modern ears. Such instances of elevating and personifying social aggregates probably do not beguile thoughtful readers today.

Insight into the gullibility of our forefathers does not guarantee, however, that we ourselves are free from a similar confusion. It may mean merely that we have invented subtler formulas. And indeed, with our modern collective symbols do we not deceive ourselves and our contemporaries quite as effectively as the rulers of an older time exploited their subjects? The theory of an additional, 'corporate' person, though we call it a "legal fiction," is nevertheless a principle which has been accepted in juristic practice down to the present day. When citizens of Georgia used the old doctrine of "States Rights" to oppose a constitutional amendment concerning child labor, no one seemed to think their argument mystical. When a political candidate, who later became the President of the United States, argued that the 'Government' should not go into business in competition with its citizens, no one appeared to recognize the fallacy which this phraseology

concealed. Publicists who plead for the 'rights of Capital' or for the 'reconciliation of Capital and Labor' are not usually brought to task by citizens who see through these vague, collective symbols. Many of us still talk about Society's laws, trends, and cycles as though such concepts, rather than human efforts, control the acts and affairs of men. At a recent Pan-American Conference the activities of our foreign investors and of soldiers protecting their investments were quietly ignored, the delegates limiting their discussion to the rights and duties of 'sovereign states.' When orators urge upon us an unquestioning, universal obedience to Law and a defense of our Country's Institutions, they tend to dull their own sensibilities and those of their hearers. As a result, few questions are raised concerning the actual practices which these terms so skillfully cover.

Is it not clear when we think about it, that many of our present appeals through institutions are as dishonest and as dangerous as the fictions of a bygone age? Are not the ideologies of today as full of illusory logic and superstition as those of yesterday? For they still abet, even while they conceal, the power and greed of men who would exploit their fellows; and they continue to exclude the masses of men and women from realizing their full capacities for living. If we would make true progress in understanding our social order, if we would take the first step toward extricating ourselves from our present confusion, it is my conviction that we must submit these controls of our thinking to a careful analysis. We must strive for a clearer insight into these subtle and pervasive illusions.

In close relation to the problem of the one and the many, there runs throughout these essays another theme of major importance. The entirety of the physical and psychological make-up, the full range of likes and dislikes, of traits and habits of every individual in an organized group comprise a totality too complex and unwieldy to serve as material for the social scientists. The groupings or the 'society' of the latter are composed, for the most part, not of human beings as wholes, but only of certain 'behavioral segments,' certain common interests, acts, and sentiments which function in an organized manner to 'keep society going.' Institutions are collections not of individuals, but of a portion of the activities of individuals. Now the tendency of some social students and leaders to ignore this fact, their at-

tempts, in theory or in practice, to force men and women into these narrow, segmentalized groupings, are yielding consequences which, in my opinion, are disastrous. Individuals cannot realize their full potentialities when we deal with them through societal categories and patterns. They must be regarded as unique organisms having tendencies and characteristic patterns of their own. It is my thesis that an individual's personality can be fully expressed only when he is given freedom of choice and responsibility in an environment composed of other free and responsible individuals.

The essays which follow are not intended as a complete or an authoritative treatise upon institutions. They represent rather a point of view. Their unity is not that of a systematic survey, but of a consistent approach. Taking up, in order, the spheres of government, business, industry, familial relationships, education, and organized religion, I have sought to apply this method in each field through a consideration of its immediate problems. It is hoped, therefore, that this book may have some interest not only for general readers, but for teachers and students who are seeking a psychological analysis of institutions and a discussion of the social problems which we are attempting, through institutional agencies, to solve.

From the standpoint of empirical investigation, I feel a certain diffidence in putting forth this book. I offer in its pages no pretense of scientific knowledge. It is presented not as fact, but as method. Though it may appear to be normative and persuasive in spirit, the only cause I have intended to plead is that of freedom in the quest for discovery and in the search of individuals for self-fulfillment. Although this book is not science, it is the view of one who tries to understand and share the task of scientists. It should be mentioned further that these essays are a by-product of a program of research upon which I have been steadily working. More precise and quantitative studies, based, like the present volume, upon the individual approach, are still in process of development. Meanwhile, because of my interest in applying this method to problems which are now urgent, and because of my confidence in it as an aid in living, I have the temerity to put forward these present efforts.

---

---

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

---

MY OBLIGATION to others for aid in the preparation of this volume is considerable. Among those who have contributed an intellectual companionship out of which many of the ideas have emerged, there is none whom I desire to thank more heartily than my friend, Mr. Evans A. Worthley. He has been a sound adviser and critic, has added to my theme from the richness and wisdom of his own experience, and has encouraged me where encouragement was needed. In scarcely less proportion are my thanks due to Amy D. Worthley for her appreciation of my efforts, and her discerning and helpful comments upon a number of the essays. To these two should be added the names of Dr. Dale A. Hartman and Dr. William C. Casey whose interest and stimulating criticism have helped me in no small measure to formulate the ideas here presented. Dr. Hartman has also related to me, from his own experience, the incident with which the first essay opens; while Dr. Casey has made invaluable comments with regard to the proofs.

For detailed, extensive suggestions in the writing of the work itself, I am deeply indebted to my brother, Dr. Gordon W. Allport. His criticisms both of argument and of style throughout large portions of the manuscript have been searching and constructive. In addition, he has taken much trouble in helping me with certain details of the publication. For these invaluable services I extend to him my sincere appreciation and thanks. I wish also to thank Dr. William E. Mosher who has read the manuscript and has made helpful suggestions upon a number of the essays.

Numerous colleagues, former students, and friends have given me similar indispensable aid, both generally and in particular portions of the work. My thanks are especially due to Dr. Richard Schanck and Mr. Osmond K. Fraenkel for help in the preparation of the historical note on the Sacco-Vanzetti case (Essay VI), to Professor John Dewey for a discussion of

some of the points raised in Essay V, to Dean Roscoe Pound for valuable advice in connection with Essay III, to Mrs. Anna H. Whittic for criticisms and for some of the data in connection with Essay XVIII, and to Dr. Arthur Jenness for the material on children's notions of institutions, presented in Essay XVII, as well as for important criticisms bearing upon the introductory essay on methodology. In the first essay I have also employed an illustration suggested by Mr. Milton C. Dickens, for which I wish to express my grateful obligation. I desire also to thank the following for their help upon various points: Dr. Harvey Peck for criticism of some of the essays dealing with economics, Dr. Freeman Galpin and Dr. Ralph Harlow for advice upon certain historical interpretations, and Dr. Finla G. Crawford, Dr. Duncan Hall, Dr. Ralph Himstead, Dr. Earle Ketcham and Dr. Paul Ward for information pertaining to political and legal subjects. In addition to these, my gratitude is rendered to many other colleagues and students of the School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in return for advice and comments contributing to the development of these essays. To the alert, discriminating observations of my wife, Ethel Margaret Allport, I am indebted for a number of the illustrations and incidents employed. I wish also to thank my friends, Mr. Severin Bischof and Dr. Max Newer, for their helpful discussion of a number of topics with which the essays deal. For important suggestions dealing with form and style, and for careful and effective work with the manuscript and proof, my deep obligation to Charlotta Gallup and to Lynnette Walker is gratefully acknowledged. Faithful and valuable aid in preparing the manuscript was also given by Fernande Guenette.

Of the twenty-two essays in this volume, seven have been previously published. These, however, have been revised and altered somewhat from their original form for use in the present work. Six of them were published in *Harper's Magazine*, as follows: "The Nationalistic Fallacy and War" (under the title, "The Psychology of Nationalism"), August, 1927; "Seeing Women as They Are," March 1929; "The Religion of a Scientist," February, 1930; "Substitutes for Homes" (under the title, "Must We Scrap the Family?"), July 1930; "Our Institutional Habits: Are They Progress or Slavery?" January, 1931; and "The Coming Era of Leisure," November, 1931. I wish to

thank the editors of *Harper's* for their generous permission to re-publish these essays here. Essay XVII, "Adult Institutions and Children's Personalities," was originally presented as an address before a conference of the Chicago Association for Child Study and Parent Education, March 7, 1930, and appeared subsequently in this earlier form in *The Child's Emotions*, a report of that conference published by the University of Chicago Press. Essay XVI, "Manifoldness and Unity in the Life of a Child," also originally an address, was delivered before an annual conference of The Child Study Association of America, in New York, October 21, 1930. It has not heretofore been published.

Various authors and publishers have given their kind permission for the use of quotations from their works. In this connection, I desire particularly to thank Professor John Dewey, Professor F. Stuart Chapin, Professor L. L. Bernard, Professor J. O. Hertzler, Mr. Shaemas O'Sheel, and Lady Jessie Foster (for permission to quote from an address of Sir John Foster, deceased). I wish also to acknowledge my special indebtedness to a volume entitled *Cultural Change*, by F. Stuart Chapin, for observations regarding changes in family life, and to *The Sacco-Vanzetti Case* by Osmond K. Fraenkel, for my account of the facts and incidents of that trial. I wish also to thank the editors of *The New Republic*, *The Manchester Guardian Weekly*, *Information Service*, and *The Voice*, as well as the publishers, Henry Holt and Company, The Century Company, D. Appleton and Company, McGraw-Hill Book Company, and the Science Press, for permission to quote from their publications.

F. H. A.

Syracuse, New York  
June, 1933



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

I. THE BEHAVIOR WE CALL OUR INSTITUTIONS . . .	3
II. THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR . . . . .	29
III. THE GOOD LIFE—IS IT AN INDIVIDUAL OR A SO- CIAL GOAL? . . . . .	49

## POLITICAL

IV. OUR STRAW MAN OF POPULAR GOVERNMENT . . .	65
V. THE PROBLEM OF THE PUBLIC . . . . .	86
VI. JUSTICE TAKES ITS COURSE . . . . .	106
VII. THE NATIONALISTIC FALLACY AND WAR . . . .	136
VIII. 'NATIONS' THEMSELVES AS SOURCES OF WAR . .	155
IX. THE PATRIOTISM OF THE FUTURE . . . . .	175

## ECONOMIC

X. OUR INSTITUTIONAL HABITS: ARE THEY PROG- RESS OR SLAVERY? . . . . .	197
XI. CORPORATE AGENCY—A FICTION OR A FALLACY? .	219
XII. THE LIFE STREAM AND THE BUSINESS FUNNEL . .	240
XIII. THE COMING ERA OF LEISURE . . . . .	261
XIV. THE DILEMMAS OF SOCIAL PLANNING . . . . .	279

## FAMILIAL

XV. SUBSTITUTES FOR HOMES . . . . .	305
XVI. MANIFOLDNESS AND UNITY IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD	322
XVII. ADULT INSTITUTIONS AND CHILDREN'S PER- SONALITIES . . . . .	336
XVIII. SEEING WOMEN AS THEY ARE . . . . .	358

## EDUCATIONAL

XIX. IMMEDIACY VERSUS INSTITUTIONALISM IN EDU- CATION . . . . .	381
--	-----

## RELIGIOUS

XX. THE GOD OF CHURCHES . . . . .	423
XXI. THE RELIGION OF A SCIENTIST . . . . .	443

## CONCLUSION

XXII. INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR AND THE HOPE OF A NEW INDIVIDUALISM . . . . .	471
---	-----





## **INTRODUCTION**



---

---

# I

## THE BEHAVIOR WE CALL OUR INSTITUTIONS

---

---

AT A MEETING of the faculty of a certain large university a proposal for a new administrative policy was being discussed. The debate was long and intense before a final vote of adoption was taken. As the professors filed out of the room an instructor continued the discussion with one of the older deans.

"Well," observed the latter official, "it may be a little hard on some people; but I feel sure that, in the long run, the new plan will be for the best interests of the institution."

"Do you mean that it will be for the good of the students?" inquired the younger man.

"No," the dean replied, "I mean it will be for the good of the whole institution."

"Oh, you mean that it will benefit the faculty as well as the students."

"No," said the dean, a little annoyed, "I don't mean *that*; I mean it will be a good thing for the institution itself."

"Perhaps you mean the trustees then—or the Chancellor?"

"No, I mean the institution, the *institution*! Young man, don't you know what an institution is?"

Probably most citizens of the civilized world of today have no clear conception of the nature of an institution. They have neither the time nor the curiosity to reflect upon their own behavior and those activities of their fellows through which the institutions of society are said to operate. They are prone to think of an institution, though intangible, as something more than individuals, as something which embraces human beings in a great scheme or purpose laid down by Society itself. In more critical moments, it is true, most persons will probably admit that such intangible social phenomena eventually simmer down to individuals, that, when submitted to the evidence of our senses, universities, govern-

ments, churches, and economic systems, resolve into so many individuals who are living and working together and are using certain buildings or equipment which they possess in common. Yet in an unreflective mood, or under emotional stress, many will slip back into a mystical way of speaking, and will refer to these phenomena as super-human agencies embodying the virtue and the wisdom of the race, prescribing modes of conduct, and exacting the support and loyalty of all good citizens. For example, the government is conceived as the 'ship of state,' the 'safeguard of human rights' and the 'guardian of prosperity.' The church is lauded as the 'rock of civilization,' the 'preserver of morals,' and the 'harbinger of God's Kingdom.' Business and industry are treated as autonomous, life-sustaining agencies which must be fostered by every public act. The school is regarded as the 'transmitter of civilization' and as the 'bulwark' of the other institutions and of society generally. Regardless of their character as human activities, institutions are frequently spoken of in terms other than those which we apply to ordinary human beings.

In order to obtain a clearer view of the realities to which the term institution refers, let us examine the question which the instructor and the dean, just mentioned, were belaboring: namely, what do we mean by a university? First of all, we find that a university includes teachers, students, executive officers, and trustees. The members of each of these groups have certain characteristic attitudes and sentiments toward one another; and each behaves toward the others and toward their common academic surroundings in definite, predictable ways. The students pursue assigned lessons; they come at certain times and places to hear lectures and to write examinations. The professors have the habit of setting assignments, delivering lectures, and conducting recitations. The administrative officials supervise registration, record academic attainments, administer discipline, secure and disburse moneys, and conduct the necessary dealings with non-academic people of the community. The treasurer can be counted upon to pay the professors certain sums of money at stated times. The president or chancellor is prepared to give diplomas to students who have completed prescribed courses of study. Secondly, there enter into the situation we call a university the attitudes of cer-

tain individuals not present upon the campus. Not only students in attendance, but individuals who have already received their diplomas and who live at a distance react with feelings of loyalty and give support when an appeal is made to them in the name of the university. Practically all the individuals of the surrounding community, though perhaps quite unfamiliar with academic life, display a certain respect and confidence toward the holders of college diplomas; and upon these attitudes the college graduate can usually rely for his future vocation and his status in the community. In addition to these attitudes, there are, thirdly, certain feelings and a sense of values which are evoked in individuals by appropriate symbols with which the name of the university has been historically connected. These experienced values are commonly known as traditions. Examples of the symbolic objects which evoke them are trophies, school colors, the words and music of songs, the names of eminent graduates or professors of the past, historic edifices, and trees or other campus landmarks. As a fourth and final group of elements of a university, there may be mentioned the physical equipment for campus living and for the activities of teaching, study, and research. Here are included offices, laboratories, classrooms, libraries, dormitories and dining quarters.

In the preceding account, which includes practically everything we may discover about a university, there is no evidence of the university as a thing in itself, that is, as something apart from these specific objects and from the individuals who are teaching, learning, and coöperating in academic relationships generally. There is no need of invoking a transcendent institution in order to explain the presence of the individuals at that place or the activities in which they are engaged. We do not find, except in the language of metaphor, a university which is fostering the pursuit of learning, but only specific students who are seeking to learn and professors who are busy at teaching or research. There is, so far as we can see, no university which is working 'through' the professors; the professors, on the contrary, are working for themselves, either because of their own interest in scholarship, or in order to win prestige, a wider reputation, or a higher salary. We witness no university in the act of setting standards of schol-

arship and awarding degrees, but only teachers, deans, presidents, and trustees who do these things 'in the name' of the university. The notion of an Alma Mater calling her sons and daughters to rally to her support, so far as exact knowledge is concerned, is a poetic fancy. We actually find only athletic directors, publicity agents, and students (past and present) who make such appeals. From the standpoint of careful description, to speak of a university as something more than the activities and the equipment of its members seems like so much wasted breath.

Someone, however, may object that a university has an existence and a life of its own, since students, professors, and administrators leave or die and are replaced, yet the *university* goes on indefinitely. But have we any real proof that it goes on? Are not the new personnel merely different persons who, having acquired their academic habits through their predecessors, carry on their intellectual work in the same buildings as the latter, using the same equipment and referring to their combined activities under the same name? Even if the buildings and equipment should change, or if the 'university' should be moved to a different location, there might still be a continuity of the name; and the inculcation of respect for this name and for symbols associated with it would continue from one generation to the next. It is true that students and teachers sometimes *think* of their university as having a life and a continuity of its own. Thinking in this way, moreover, may modify, to some extent, their academic behavior and their relationships. But the fact that they think and act upon the assumption that their university is a super-individual reality does not prove that it is such a reality. The early Greek conception of lightning as the thunder-bolt of Zeus was widely accepted and transmitted through succeeding generations; it also probably entered into the emotional life and the activities of the people in a profound way. Yet these facts do not constitute the slightest proof that the imagined Being called Zeus existed.

The official who, in our opening illustration, insisted that a policy could be for the interest of the institution without necessarily benefitting any particular individual might pursue, at this point, a somewhat different attack. He might argue that a university has an existence of its own because it has its peculiar

interests, quite apart from the interests of its members. Every college president, he will say, has had the experiences of planning and ordering for the benefit of the university, without regard for particular individuals who constitute its membership at a given time. Such a course of action is not only proper but eminently useful. The interest of a university as such is the preservation and enhancement of that office for which it exists, namely, the function of education. Anything which will help education to go on effectively among the student body at that particular place will be for the interest of the institution; anything which defeats this activity will be against its interest. But, we reply, is not this aim of education an interest also of the particular individuals enrolled? If the major desire of the university members were not to become educated, the attributing of this purpose to the 'university' would be meaningless. The term interest, in fact, can be properly applied only to living beings. When I oil my lawn mower my interest may be said to lie in having a smoothly running machine. The machine runs better for being oiled. It can hardly be said, however, that the lawn mower itself has an interest in being oiled. Similarly with a university: the individuals employ their habits of academic behavior which make up the university to aid them in learning; they have, therefore, a genuine interest in keeping these habits properly functioning. They look to the college administrator to aid in this matter, just as I rely on my oil can to keep my lawn mower running smoothly; but one cannot say that these habits of study themselves, apart from the individuals in whom they operate, have any interest in preserving their own activity. The interest concerned lies in the integrated personality of the individuals as wholes. It is true that the purpose sometimes ascribed to an institution may not be the purpose of *all* its members, but only of a leader or of a small, privileged group. Such an aim, however, is always, so far as human knowledge goes, the purpose of *some* specific individual or individuals. It is never the interest of the institution as such, apart from the wishes of any human being concerned.

These discrepancies between the different views of institutions are due mainly to the contradiction between two differing approaches. When we set ourselves to describe these phenomena in



the detached manner of a natural scientist, the institution as such disappears, and one sees only individuals. Thus the realistic observer of collegiate institutions sees only particular teachers and students interacting with one another, and apparently animated by the personal rewards of teaching and scholarship at that particular time and place. Such an observer sees the executive as one whose duty it is to keep these persons working together effectively toward these ends, and to determine the effect of methods of study and coöperation upon their scholastic attainment and their welfare as individuals.

When, however, we wish not merely to describe, but to control human action, when we seek to arouse feeling or effort toward some *ulterior* end, the institution then becomes for us the reality, while individuals fade into the background. The attitudes of college presidents, chancellors, or deans, are likely to be somewhat different from those of the disinterested observer; for these officials often look beyond the immediate academic behavior of individuals toward a more distant goal, the 'university' itself. A president, for example, may look at his university as a reality independent of its present members, because to him it may seem an instrument for maintaining a standard of scholarship, fostering research, guiding social policies, and assuming a definite leadership in the community or the nation. Of this institution he is the head and spokesman, and in its development he takes a natural pride. Through it he feels that he is accomplishing a service to society while at the same time building for himself a successful career. Now if, in looking toward these services to the community, the administrator were to think of himself (or be thought of by others) only as a regulator of academic habits or as a supervisor of the equipment of a particular group of students and professors, his zest for administrative achievement might be considerably diminished. To a disinterested investigator only individuals are significant; the institution is merely their manner of functioning. To an administrator, who is interested not only in individuals but in 'results,' the abstract institution is sometimes likely to seem the more real and important. A descriptive scientist sees the spokes of the wheel and the rim as elements which, though working together, have each a separate and im-

portant reality; an administrator is likely to see neither the spokes nor the rim, but the entire wheel. He may look at the wheel, moreover, not for itself, but as a method of taking him where he wants to go.

Here then are the two contrasting approaches to the phenomena we call our institutions. Though diametrically opposed both in logic and in method, each is tenaciously followed by persons who, in differing capacities, have to do with the study or the ordering of human conduct. And paradoxically, both are often followed, at different times, by the same individual.

It is not college presidents alone who tend to regard their universities as realities independent of their individual members. The trustees of such an institution often treat it as an entity so far as its financial status and its relationships with the community are concerned. The case is similar with citizens at large, who are interested in the appraisal of a college education rather than in the activities of students in attaining it. It is not the particular officials who are commonly regarded as imposing rules, setting standards, and granting degrees, but rather, the university. In campaigns for financial support, where the objective is ulterior rather than an immediate participating interest in academic affairs, the concept of the transcendental institution is again employed. It is more effective to plead for money in the name of the city's university or for one's Alma Mater, than for more homely purposes such as equipping Professor Jones' laboratory, raising Professor Smith's salary, improving certain classroom facilities, or giving to particular students more complete library privileges. Indeed, students themselves look beyond their daily activities to values which seem to lie not in individuals but in the institution. There is nothing very inspiring in being merely one of a large body of students and professors who have worked together in certain buildings. But if one is identified as a graduate of ——— University, an old and distinguished institution of learning, one is immediately stamped as a leader in the community. A cheer for eleven particular students, all wearing the same color, and so coöperating that one of them carries a ball over a white line before eleven other students wearing sweaters of a different color can stop him, would strike any collegian as an odd mis-

carriage of academic spirit. But if the game is felt to be the struggle of 'Old Harvard' against an 'ancient rival' for the honor of the 'Crimson,' enthusiasm is brought to the highest pitch.

Human emotions, self-elation, leadership, convenience, the necessity for concerted action, and the aims of officials—all these and many other considerations enter into our thinking and acting to encourage the belief that institutions exist above the heads of men and women. Yet such a view, in our calmer and more critical moments, is contradicted both by the evidence of our senses and by our sober judgment.

## II

Despairing of light from the laymen's confusion, we turn to the experts. When, however, we review the writings of scholars, we are troubled by the same contradiction. The social experts, like the laymen, shuttle back and forth between the horns of this dilemma, speaking of individuals at one moment and of institutional entities in the next. Their statements regarding the nature of institutions fall into two general classes: first, those phrased in purely abstract terms which are names of classes, and second, those which are expressed in metaphors. Formulas of the first type characterize institutions merely as collections of something else, with no hint of any substantive reality apart from the units of which the collection is composed. One writer, for example, speaks of an institution as a "cultural complex"; another says the term 'covers' such and such phenomena; still others call an institution a "grouping of individuals," a "process," a "set of rules or practices," a "relationship," or a "means." An institution has also been spoken of simply as "ways," "established usages," "ideas," or a "system of habits or reactions." These expressions, for the most part, denote only a plurality. But a mere plurality, apart from the objects of which it is composed, has no concrete or tangible meaning. The use of a collective or plural noun in a definition as the complement of a singular verb suggests an error of logic. To say, for example, that an institution *is* ideas, folkways, or relationships is much like saying that one thing is many things. If an institution, as a single, identifiable thing, has any reality as a part of the objective world

of nature, if it is to be kept from dissolving into a mere plurality of individuals or habits, then some substantive term must be found to denote it. The efforts of the ablest scholars, however, to find that term has yielded nothing better than the collective abstractions which have been quoted above.

But the urge to believe that an institution is something independent of individuals cannot easily be quelled. It springs from divers sources: from enthusiasm, loyalty, self-esteem, the impulse to control, and the eagerness of social students to find a convenient, easy, and at the same time, respectable terminology. In order not to abandon this conception, its advocates are therefore driven to extremes of circumlocution. Having failed to find any class of things, other than individuals and their attributes, to which institutions might be assigned, some of the authorities have fallen back upon that time-worn obscurity, definition by analogy. The analogical definitions of institutions are exceedingly numerous and varied. They abound in personification, reification, metonymy, and other figures. In no case, however, is it the institution itself which is denoted, but only something which the institution is said to resemble. Institutions have been spoken of as "social capital," "machinery for performing collective functions," "vehicles," and "frameworks." Writing upon the tendency of institutions to become inflexible, one author uses in the space of two and one-half pages the following remarkable series of analogies. Institutions are figuratively described by him as useless old creatures living beyond their time, as gruesome forms, bones, stones, machines, dignitaries, casuists, reactionaries, dogmatists, smug people, paternalists, museums for fossils, deposit places, decadent families, social vestiges, structures, trees, crystals, creatures capable of 'institutional fatigue,' and family monuments.<sup>1</sup>

Since definitions by analogy never point to the object defined, but always to something which it resembles, they are of little value in leading us to the object itself or in helping us to begin upon it our task of analysis and study. All that we can do is

<sup>1</sup> In fairness, it should be said that these metaphors were probably not intended by their author as precise definitions, but only as descriptive characterizations of institutions.

to describe it by further analogies. Thus, if an institution is defined by analogy as a person, one cannot study it by handling or experimenting; one can only develop the comparison further by pointing out in its operations analogies for the *particular attributes* of a person. The whole treatment, therefore, becomes anthropomorphic. Another procedure, equally sterile for research, is to personify not the institutions of society, but society itself, and to define institutions as the means through which this 'over-person,' Society, 'controls individuals,' 'perpetuates itself,' and 'attains deliberately approved ends.' All this duplication of individual and societal action, this bringing in of society or of institutions as Beings whose behavior, though outside the realm of human experience, is nevertheless described in human terms, contributes neither to our knowledge of an institution nor to our search for some avenue of investigation. It is mere tautology.

If the vagueness of collective abstractions in defining institutions is useless, the employment of metaphors is worse. Definitions by analogy result not only in obscurity of thinking, but in futility of observation. By a literary turn their authors conceal a poverty of real meaning and deceive their hearers into thinking that they are on the road to understanding. The victim of such a practice is likely to come through it with the illusion that his data are all gathered and his conclusions reached; whereas, in reality, he has not even started—nor has he envisaged his project in such a manner that a start can be made. He has not only failed to solve his problem, but has closed the door upon it.

### III

It appears then that, concerning the nature of institutions, not merely laymen, but scholars also, are in a state of perplexity. The meaning of the term shifts so completely with a change in one's approach that a single, clear definition becomes almost impossible. When we accept institutions uncritically, without definition, and try to do things *through* them, we get one picture; when we try to study institutions precisely, in and for themselves, (that is, when we try to do something *to* them), we get a wholly different view. Or perhaps it would be better, in the latter instance, to say that we get no view of them at all. When social

students describe the *functions* of institutional activity,—when they speak, for example, of the work of the state, the church, the business organization, or the school—practically everyone knows what they mean. When, however, they attempt to define these organizations as *independent realities*, that is, in terms other than the purposes of individuals, they speak in a babble of tongues. They cannot point to the institution; they cannot name the class to which it belongs or state its essential nature. They can only say that it is a pattern or system, a collection of something else, or else merely a mental concept. They can illustrate how an institution works, but they cannot tell of what it is composed. They can tell what it *resembles*, but they cannot tell what it *is*.

From all these failures there emerges a challenging conclusion: an institution, perhaps, is not a substantive thing at all. It is not a term by which we denote something in the same category with the natural objects about us; it is a term by which we do no more than record our observation that individuals are living and working together in certain ways. It is not a tangible thing, but a conceptual relationship of things. The notion of an institution is, in some ways, like the notion of a triangle. The three points which are necessary to the existence of a triangle are definite and are located for practical use by a material having substance, such as ink or the graphite of a lead pencil. Nevertheless, the triangle itself is not substantial; it is a conceptual relationship. It is our way of conceiving and reacting to those three points. A triangle is not discovered in nature by bumping into it as we might bump into trees or stones, nor even as we might react to the material of the three dots which it conceptually joins. We do not encounter it and then define it. On the contrary, if we are looking for it in nature, we must first define it and then proceed to find objects which are so arranged as to fulfill our definition. If we do not find them, we may ourselves place three movable objects in such a relationship. We can create a triangle, in other words, as the expression of our own purpose. A triangle has always the reality of conception or purpose, but never, so far as we know, the reality of something independent of ourselves which we may encounter or discover. Now the definition of an institution, like that of a triangle, is in terms not of sub-

stantial things, but of what we ourselves do, that is, of the manner in which we orient ourselves, in our thinking or acting, toward the objects about us. Just as we react to three given points in space in such a manner as to draw from them the conception of a triangle with all its theorems and practical uses, so we respond to other individuals in those relationships of coöperation, dominance, or submission, which give us both the conception and the practical working of the institution. Just as the notion of a triangle helps us to respond in certain useful ways to three points in our environment, so the notion of an institution helps us to understand what the individuals about us are doing and enables us to coöperate with them in our common existence. The notion of a triangle, however, does not make it possible for us actually and physically to encounter in nature such an object (triangle); nor does it give us any knowledge about the materials (graphite, etc.) of which the points visually defining this figure are composed. Similarly the notion of an 'institution' points out no object which answers to that name and can be concretely studied; neither does it tell us anything about the individuals by whose relationships it is constituted, beyond the suggestion that they probably possess certain habits through whose functioning this relationship is maintained.

The institutional approach is also similar, in some ways, to the use of a guide book or a map. A map shows the relationships of the parts of an unfamiliar country over which we are to travel; it helps us to adjust ourselves to it and to find our way. Similarly, an anthropologist visiting an hitherto unknown tribe can react more intelligently to their behavior when he obtains, as a key, some notion of their institutions. A map, however, shows only relationships between objects; it does not convey an accurate impression of the objects themselves. If the traveler tries to substitute his experience with the map for his experience with the ground itself, and concludes that in covering the one he has covered also the other, he will be committing himself to a fruitless and dangerous course. Similarly, an ethnologist by reading, hearing, or thinking about the institutions of a certain tribe, may gain valuable clues for understanding some of the activities of the individuals. But if he treats this experience as equivalent to a

contact with the individuals themselves, or if he regards such a study as an adequate investigation of the individual psychology of primitive men, he will be making a costly blunder.

#### IV

Our vocabulary of science contains two types of names. The first consists of words denoting objects which impinge, directly or through the surrounding media, upon our sense organs,—objects which can be observed, described, manipulated, analyzed, experimented with, and generalized about. The objects which such names indicate do not appear to come to us through any reflection or theorizing of our own, but by our stumbling upon something which is outside ourselves. Words such as rock, tree, acid, water, fish, and man, are names denoting this type of experience. Objects of this sort can be singled out by pointing with our hand or by turning our eyes or our bodies; they can also be taken apart and experimentally studied through the use of our sense organs, our nerves, and our skeletal muscles, aided by the instruments and techniques of science. We can react to them in a manual and bodily manner, for they are capable of precise location in space. Such objects, we may say, are *capable of explicit denotation*. It is with objects of this sort that all experimental and descriptive investigations of the world about us begin. Things which are *not* of this sort, terms for example, denoting natural laws, formulas, and hypotheses may or may not be present in our thinking at the beginning of an investigation; but some sort of outer, explicitly denotable object *must* be present. Otherwise no investigation of the world about us is possible.

The second type of names used in scientific work are those dealing not with objects capable of being explicitly treated, but with abstract things, such as relationships. These abstractions are phases of our experience with which we can deal only by *thinking* or *talking* about them. They cannot be heard, seen, handled, or pointed to with any part of our bodies. Such terms include properties (such as length, hardness, redness, etc.) which we 'abstract' from explicitly denotable objects by the process of reflection. They also include the laws or hypotheses which



we formulate about objects in order to describe their actions. We talk, for example, of such things as gravitation, electrical change, erosion, growth, reproduction, evolution, and person-ality. We do not respond directly to these concepts; we cannot take them apart or manipulate them. We can only make re-sponses of thought or communication *about* them. We can speak, write, or make gestures to denote them; we can employ them as symbols of communication; but we cannot in treating of them bring our bodies into direct and explicit contact with the things about which we are talking. Such things, we may say, are capable only of *implicit denotation*.<sup>2</sup>

In actual scientific research explicit and implicit forms of de-notation are closely related. We react to objects which are explicitly denotable, and then, in order to standardize and record our reaction and to convey an understanding of it to others, we make other responses whose reference is *implicit*. An apple falls, according to our experience, always toward the earth. Now the realities denoted by the terms 'apple' and 'earth' are both capable of being reacted to by our bodies in an explicit manner, that is, of being explicitly denoted. We need, however, in addition to 'apple' and 'earth,' some term to designate the relationship

---

<sup>2</sup> The reader should avoid confusing the present usage of the terms 'explicit' and 'implicit' with their use by certain behaviorists. Dr. John B. Watson, for example, treats as 'implicit' any response which cannot be readily noted in the subject by another person; 'explicit,' in his usage, indicates readily vis-ible or measurable responses. My problem, however, is not one of classifying human behavior, but of distinguishing the different types of relationships between scientists' behavior and the environment they study. 'Explicit,' in the present discussion means any relationship of the investigator to his en-vironment of such a character that his movements are capable actually of affecting, taking apart, or altering some object about him. 'Implicit' denotes a situation in which the investigator's movements can do something not directly to, but only *about* the object before him (and this regardless of whether his behavior is visible to another observer or not). Certain move-ments may be explicit in their reference in one connection and merely implicit in another according to the outer circumstances, that is, according to the realities with which we are dealing when we make these movements. It will be seen that I am here concerned with 'explicit' and 'implicit' not as types of *behavior*, but as distinguishing forms of denotation of the things with which scientists deal. My classification is not physiological, but methodo-logical.

(tendency to move toward each other) which we have found to exist between them. We therefore employ a special term 'gravitation.' Now gravitation is not something we encounter in an explicit manner; it is something which we seem to discover by reflection. It derives its meaning not by pointing or by making responses directly to the apple and the earth, but rather by thinking or talking *about* them. Gravitation, therefore, is capable of *implicit*, not of explicit, denotation. To take another illustration: we react with our bodies to pieces of wire and to plates in acid solutions. These are explicitly denoted objects. From the result of this experience we think and talk about currents, watts, ohms, conductance, resistance, and the 'laws' of electrical phenomena in general. This second class of entities are capable only of implicit denotation. A biologist encounters organisms. As he manipulates, dissects, and experiments with them, he makes inferences also in the nature of biological laws and principles. These latter are implicitly denoted entities. To a psychologist, a man, as a physical organism, is explicitly denotable; but his habits or his traits of personality, like the principles of growth and conductance, are capable only of implicit denotation.

Now it is to our second class of terms, names for things which are *implicitly* denoted, that the notion of an institution belongs. Just as the concepts of conductance and resistance pertain to the action of the parts, or explicit materials, used in a particular combination known as an electric circuit, so the terms university, industry, church, or state, refer to activities, or habits, which individuals in certain relationships perform. This institutional arrangement of uniform and coöperating habits, like the actions of the parts of an electric circuit, gives us a formula, a means of generalization, and a basis of prediction. But useful as the notion of an institution may be for such ends, it is absolutely incapable, in itself, of being explicitly denoted, pointed to, or manipulated. In the case of the electric circuit we find that it is only when we turn from the concept of the circuit to the *materials operating* as a circuit that we can begin an investigation or learn anything new about electrical science. And sim-

ilarly it is only when we abandon the institution for a time and fix our attention on the individuals that we discover a reality which can be encountered and which affords us a starting point in our investigation of the human world about us. We do not study institutions, but *individuals*, as tangible objects. Institutions are the things we say *about* the objects, that is, the individuals, we study.<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding their convenience, a danger besets the use of names for things implicitly denoted against which we must be continually upon our guard. We are prone to forget that such things are known to us *only* in this implicit, or conceptual manner. Sometimes we delude ourselves into believing that they

---

<sup>3</sup> There are those who maintain that an institution or a co-functioning group are methodologically no different from a biological individual; for just as an individual organism can be reduced to an aggregate of tissues and cells all functioning together, so an institution reduces to individuals in their coöperative activities. This contention, however, is unsound. Whether an individual can be reduced to the co-functioning of unit cells or not, he is, at least before such a reduction takes place, an object capable of explicit denotation, capable, that is, of experimental manipulation and analysis into spatially separate parts. He is a reality which we would surely stumble over if he were to lie across our pathway on a dark night. Should our critic object that, in our illustration, we would be stumbling not over an individual, but over organs, cells, molecules, atoms, or electrons, we would be willing to concede his point. The fact, nevertheless, remains that we would stumble. This, manifestly, would not be true in the case of our encounter with an institution. There exists no evidence of any higher organism, or of any aggregate of human beings or their coöperative activities above the level of individuals, which is of such a sort that it could lie across our pathway and cause us to stumble. And without some physical encounter of this sort we cannot begin an experimental or manipulative study of the object in question. We can collide with an individual organism, and the collision will give us some object which we can then proceed to analyze and study. We can then trace out its component parts and the laws of its activity. But we cannot collide with an *institution*. We lack, therefore, in the latter instance, that basis from which an explicit investigation of the object can begin. Our only recourse in this case would be to call the individual or individuals with whom we have collided the institution, and state that the parts or activities of the individuals are the parts or laws of action of the institution. This procedure, however, would tell us nothing new about our world: it would be pure tautology. Clearly then an institution is not a direct counterpart, upon a higher level, of the biological organism on the individual human plane, but a different sort of thing. There exists between an individual and an organized group or institution a difference of the first importance for scientific investigation.

are subject to the same experimental study as objects capable of explicit denotation, or that the conclusions reached in talking about them have the same value and validity as those discovered in dealing with explicitly denoted things. This is a fatal error. It is a confusion of explicit objects with the formulations which we make *about* them. Tied up in our own definitions we travel in circles, postulating nature instead of discovering it. This error of confusing the implicit with the explicit in experience is accountable for the dilemma of scholars and laymen in their attempt to define an institution. Since institutions are experienced only in an implicit manner, it is impossible to define them, as entities distinct from individuals, by reference to any class of explicitly denoted, natural objects. Yet the unquenchable desire of some writers to endow them with an existence like that of rocks, trees, and men, and to subject them to the same methods of study, has led these authorities to attempt the impossible. As we have seen, they have succeeded only in producing empty collective abstractions; or else they have resorted to analogies, which, though explicit enough in their reference, are false if taken literally and irrelevant if taken otherwise.

A falling apple strikes us, and we take our cue from it (and from similar experiences) for phrasing a useful generalization concerning falling bodies. The law of gravitation, however, does not strike us. We can neither see it, handle it, nor make it the direct object of our investigation. A physicist who started by looking about him for a force or substance known as gravity which he might subject to experimental analysis would be like the man who set out to find the end of the rainbow. In order to experience gravitational phenomena at all one must deal with *falling or moving objects* which can be explicitly handled. Similarly, a student of social science who sought at the start to lay his hands upon an institution as such and subject it to direct analysis would soon find himself lost in a sea of words. If his investigation is to be profitable, he must search first for concrete, explicitly denoted materials which are behaving institutionally, and from whose behavior he may make his generalizations in terms of the institutional concept. Such materials he will find in the individual human beings about him. It is true that he

must also have in mind a notion of what he means by 'behaving institutionally' when he selects his objects for explicit study; just as the physicist must have a notion of what 'falling' means in practical experience in order that he may find falling objects and study their action. But neither 'institution' nor 'falling' can be defined in explicit terms, and neither can be taken alone, in the absence of objects which are explicitly denotable, as the beginning of a scientific investigation.

## V

The conclusion that institutions are incapable of being explicitly denoted should not be taken as evidence that they do not exist. Whether relationships in nature are real, that is, whether relational terms, which can be experienced only implicitly, are or are not as real as the objects related, is a question which demands a criterion of reality surpassing our present human knowledge. It is impossible for us either to prove or to disprove that things which can be indicated only implicitly really exist, or to tell what the nature of their existence may be. The important question, however, about institutions is not the problem of their ultimate reality, but what they mean to us as methods of approaching our experience. Although we may never know whether institutions are independently real, it does make a considerable difference in our thinking and living if we *act as though* they are real. Let us ask ourselves, therefore, what attitude we must assume in order that we shall seem to experience an institution as a reality; and what are the consequences of our holding to the belief in such a reality as the basis of our thoughts and actions.

Let us return to our example of the electric circuit. To one who did not 'grasp the idea' of putting metals and acids together in such a way as to generate electric energy, the materials composing such a system would seem a purely arbitrary assemblage of objects, having little or no meaning. Such an observer would see plates, liquids, wires, and connecting posts; but he would see no circuit. The meaning of the circuit exists not so much in the materials in which it operates, as in the attitudes of those who recognize and know how to use it. Applying the same

observation to social phenomena, we find that we must also have the idea, or function, of the institution in mind before the institution becomes to us a reality. Just as we read into the parts of the electric circuit the meaning of their interrelation as a functioning whole, so we must try to understand the actions of individuals with reference to the totality of human inter-relationships to which they belong. As we joined the parts of the circuit together so that, through their co-activity, they would do useful work, so we react toward our fellow men, and they toward us, in such a way as to accomplish certain practical and mutually desired ends. Institutions, in other words, take on reality for us *when we are looking for the fulfillment of some purpose upon a collective, or multi-individual scale*. We envisage an institution when we regard human beings as coöperating, in a regular and habitual fashion, toward the satisfying of some common human want. We cannot experience an institution as a reality when we merely examine or study individuals disinterestedly, but only when we try to do something *through* individuals by organizing them (or conceiving them as organized), in the direction of some ulterior, common end. When understood in this sense, terms denoting institutional fields, such as business, government, the church, the school, and the family are clear to all.

## VI

These practical relationships, or institutional fields of action, though they are themselves incapable of explicit reference, nevertheless serve as an aid to explicit study in a unique and interesting way. They orient us toward a study of the explicitly denoted elements (individuals) of whose behavior they are composed. Our concept of a triangle again affords an illustration. It will be recalled that the triangle itself, as a pure geometric concept, cannot become the object of our explicit, manipulative study. Nevertheless, by our taking an attitude to 'see' a triangle in nature we are led to pick out three particular dots; and these dots, as bits of explicitly denoted material, may then be set off from thousands of other things in the world for our special attention. Or again, the direction of a bar of metal with respect to a magnetic pole, as pure position, is a phenomenon which can

be denoted only in an implicit manner. Nevertheless by setting himself to notice such relationships in the world about him, a scientist is led to pick out certain fields of objects and events for special study. The notion of magnetic attraction thus serves him as a methodological concept. It directs his attention continually to certain minerals and their behavior, and leads him to improve his generalizations about them. Just as triangles and compass deflections are bits of implicit experience which direct us toward the study of certain objects and their relationships, so, in the social field, the implicitly experienced notion of an institution leads us to encounter certain objects (human beings) who are acting in a certain general manner. These individuals, since they are explicitly denotable objects, can then be subjected to careful observation and manipulative study, as a result of which the behavior in which we are interested can be more accurately described and understood.

Let us consider, for example, the behavior involved in an urban traffic system. If an observer from Mars, wholly ignorant of earth beings and their ways, were to look down from one of our tall buildings upon a cluster of automobiles at the intersection of two busy streets, he would probably be lost in bewilderment. Unless he understood the common purpose towards which the behavior of all motorists was directed, he would see only successive groups of objects, starting and stopping at the same time. To such an observer the red signal at the intersection would have no significance different from that of any other object commonly present in motorists' environments when they stop. He might classify the light, for example, as belonging in the same category with detour signs, with obstacles in the road, or with arresting bits of scenery. He might include in his field of observation the responses of the individuals not merely to the traffic signals, but to colored lights of every description. There would be, in short, no purposive guide through which to connect certain stimuli with certain responses in a unified field for systematic observation.

Suppose now that we inform our Martian observer that all this flux of lights and traffic is a method whereby automobilists

may drive about the city as rapidly as possible without collision. Immediately he begins to perceive more clearly, and to select and unify his impressions. Certain things fit themselves at once into the picture; others are as promptly rejected. He neglects as irrelevant such objects, for example, as colored billboards and advertising signs, as well as all changes of speed on the part of motorists which are not associated directly with the purpose of traffic facilitation. The lights are not merely bits of colored illumination, they become *traffic signals*. The observer might also include in his survey many objects which are different in character from traffic lights, for example, boulevard stop signs, policemen, or processions of 'one way' traffic. All these elements are now experienced by him in a unified relationship, that, namely, of traffic regulation. To have such an understanding of any institutional pattern of behavior an observer, therefore, must first approach it with the attitude of a practical citizen living and functioning within the relationships involved. In order to comprehend an institution we must first comprehend its purpose. It is from such an approach that an institution, as an implicit pattern of human relationships, becomes a significant reality; and it is only by accepting the institution as such a reality that certain broad and useful classifications of human action can be revealed.

But after we have once understood the meaning of the institutional field and have found the individuals of whose relationship the field consists, we are free to shift our approach. We may now permit the ulterior purpose (the comprehension of the institution) to fade from our view, and may turn to the activities of the individuals themselves, to the objects, in other words, which are explicitly denotable and with which our investigation, as manipulative experience, can begin. The traffic observer having once understood the meaning of traffic regulation, and having learned to discriminate individuals acting as part of this system from those who are not, may forget all about the goal of safe and efficient driving which gives this system its meaning. He may now center his attention upon the explicitly denotable realities, the individuals, in order to ascertain the bearing of their 'traffic'



habits upon other aspects of their behavior. He might record, for example, their differing degrees of action, such as completely stopping before the signal, slowing somewhat, or going ahead without change of speed. He might then note whether the characteristic performance of an individual in this regard bears any relation to this 'natural' rate of driving, to his various other habits, or to his temperament in general. Or again, he might try to discover whether the necessity of a certain motorist's driving in accordance with the traffic regulation has prevented him from driving in a manner which might be more characteristic of him as an individual. To make such inquiries, however, it is necessary, once we have used the notion of the institution to find and understand the field of action, to lay aside the 'institution' and deal only with the behavior of the individuals whom we encounter in this field. We must deal with them, moreover, not merely in terms of the institutional purpose, but in terms of explicit and objective description. In order to find individuals to study who are behaving institutionally, we must start by accepting the reality of the institution; but in order to study them we must forget the institution and see only the individuals themselves.

Let us return to our illustration of a university. In order to encounter individuals in such a situation we must locate a group where we can recognize the relationships and the common purpose of education to be paramount. In order to find 'university' students, we must first recognize a university. But having used the notion of the university to locate the general field of our problem, we are now free to shift our attitude from the institutional and purposive approach to the observation of what the individuals are actually doing. Education through an institution of learning is no longer the goal of our interest, but the actions and conditions of human beings as they are being educated. Having once located the individuals and their activities by the 'teleological map' we call the institution, we can lay the map aside. The institution, of course, in the telic and implicitly conceived sense, keeps on operating; and we can shift our attention back upon it whenever we choose. It is also true that not everything about the behavior of the individuals can be fully under-

stood without reference to their coöperation in the institution. Nevertheless, it is possible, for our present purpose, to put aside the institutional approach and view the individuals purely as individuals. We now observe, not a 'university' in operation, but merely certain students, professors, and administrators who are studying, instructing, doing research, or giving academic directions. Every activity, as we have observed before, is actually performed by individuals; and all of these activities, both separate and reciprocal, can be accounted for in terms of the purposes of individuals. A purpose of the institution itself does not need to be invoked.

A manufacturer, to take still another example, may speak of his personnel system, his factory organization, or his business as a system for production and profit which is quite independent of the particular workers or executives who are, at the moment, employed. We can find these employees in order to observe their behaviors only by going to the 'company's' records, or by visiting the 'company's' plant—in other words, by taking as a starting point the notion of the 'institution.' But once we have found the workers by placing ourselves, as it were, in the field of their coöordinated behavior, the industrial institution, with its underlying purpose of production, may fade from the scene. There now remains only the particular workers and employers with their individual traits, abilities, and desires, each performing certain regular activities at particular times and places. Passing then from the institutional approach to the study of these explicitly encountered realities, the individuals, we may observe the significance of their 'institutional' actions in the economy of their lives as biological organisms and psychological personalities. We may note, for example, the effect of industrial competition upon the executives as individuals, or the relation of habits of machine production to the hygiene and the attitudes of the workers. We may inquire how the movements of the workers, which might have been performed individually in the absence of organization, are altered by working in a highly organized and competitive industry.

In the field of politics most persons are probably accustomed

to think of power as residing in the political office, in Congress, or in the government at large. Individuals are called upon to be loyal, not to particular leaders, nor even to their own principles, but to the 'government' or to their 'party.' Here again, the view is institutional; for we are interested not in describing the actual behavior of individuals which makes up the field of politics, but in securing concerted action through which some common ulterior objective may be gained. As soon, however, as we turn from such institutional considerations to the elements which can be explicitly dealt with, that is, as soon as we set ourselves to observe what individual citizens and office holders are doing, the notion of the 'institution of government' as a controlling agency becomes something of a myth. The scene now resolves itself into particular executives, legislators, judges, political bosses, or citizens each having his own peculiarities of ability and character, and each putting to use, for ends which are either selfish or public spirited (but always his own ends), the influence of his prestige or the common habits of obedience to the symbols of authority. Here again, the implicitly denoted thing we call the institution, which is so real to the practical leader as an instrument of control, is real to the student of human behavior only as a means of calling attention to an interesting field of action which might otherwise be overlooked.

Starting from the scene of human living, there lie before us always these two diverging pathways. When on the road of the implicit, organized, and collective purposes of men we are interested only in discovering how the habits of individuals can be made to function together toward the better satisfaction of some common need. When we are on the track of explicitly observable human beings, we care nothing for the objectives toward which the habits of individuals are organized and directed, but only for an accurate account of those habits themselves as characteristic behavior of the individuals concerned. In the former view institutions are often considered as realities, with purposes of their own, apart from the individuals; in the latter they are nothing but the purposes and activities of the individuals themselves. On the pathway towards societal achievement we are engrossed

by the end to be accomplished; the activities of men and women are of secondary importance and attract notice only as means to such an end. For our study of individuals these means of institutional accomplishment become the ends themselves. From the former approach the institution is the preëminent reality; from the latter, the individual. From the one view we see how institutions are said to work in controlling and directing individuals; from the other we see how individuals behave in order to make 'their institutions' work. The one account is in terms of how institutions operate; the other tells us, in terms of human behavior, what institutions *are*. The one treatment is instrumental, the other purely descriptive. The one picture shows us, in terms of leaders, what institutions can do *for* us; the other brings us a realization of what, figuratively speaking, they are doing *to* us. From the former approach we are interested in the success of the institution as a method of providing some particular good which is important for life; from the latter we are concerned with the manner in which institutional habits affect the individual's life itself, that is, the degree in which they enhance or limit his integrity, his autonomy, and his opportunity for self-expression.

The aim and method of these essays should now be clear. Our approach will be that of the second pathway. *Institutional behavior* is that portion of human action which we can observe through studying individuals as they function in their institutional relationships. We are not interested in such behavior as a means of bringing individuals to the accomplishment of an ulterior, or institutional, purpose, but only in its immediate relation to the lives of the individuals themselves. The notion of the institution we employ only as a means of locating our problem, of directing our observation towards groups of individuals who at the moment are manifesting the behavior which we have called institutional. An institution is a conceptional field, capable only of implicit denotation, which, when we set ourselves conceptually to recognize it, so orients us that we encounter certain objects in certain relationships, objects which can be *explicitly* denoted. These objects are human individuals, and it is their behavior in

their institutional relationships which we are now concerned in studying. And, finally, we are to study this behavior not through the metaphors of institutional leaders who are seeking direction and control, but through the observation and experiment which explicit contact with the objects before us can alone make possible. Institutional behavior, then, is that behavior which we observe individuals in a field of institutional relationships to be performing, when we, as observers, give up the implicit, purposive approach by which this field and the individuals within it were selected, and regard the individuals themselves as the unique, explicit, and independent objects of our investigation.

---

---

## II

### THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR

---

---

WESTERN civilization has been created by men and women who have lived and worked together under the formula of institutions. Their behavior, their ideology, and their modes of feeling and thinking have been largely institutional. These builders of civilization at times have even regarded their own increasing strength and wisdom as the strength and wisdom of their institutions. Their own material and moral progress they have ascribed in large measure to the high character of the institutions which human society has achieved. In government, industry, education, morals, and organized religion there has thus been a steady strengthening of the hands of institutional leaders, under the assumption that the evolving of institutions is to bring about the logical fulfillment of human destiny. In crises of every sort, in floods, in famines, in poverty, in depressions, in panics, and in war, men turn habitually toward their institutions as their chief hope of salvation. The social structure today seems so vast and our problems so complicated that we despair of much help from the insight or the capacities of individual citizens. Even when we select some leader to guide us we expect him to do so not through his personal qualities alone, but by working through the channels of our institutions. The past and present of men's endeavors in this direction have been recorded in libraries of books and documents. Record and conjecture concerning the workings of human institutions comprise, indeed, the bulk of our traditional social science.

Living as we do in this complex institutional era, the lack of awareness which many of us display concerning the nature of institutions and our own participation in them is little short of astonishing. Our hunger is satisfied through a world-wide system of habits intricately coöperating in the production, transportation, and distribution of foods. Our control over our environment is extended by collective enterprises involving extensive habits

of capital, credit, and invention. Dangers are removed, diseases are prevented, and our heaviest labors lifted from us through an elaborate system of corporate action, engineering, and machine production. Our property, our civilized culture, and our very lives are protected through institutionalized habits and methods,—through laws, courts, schools, insurance systems, traffic regulations, police and fire departments, clinics, health bureaus, and housing commissions. Modern life is lived largely in and through those institutional activities which make all these collective adjustments possible. But since all these patterns of organization are a part of the cultural heritage into which each of us, by no will of his own, was born, we tend to take them for granted. Forgetting that they are, after all, only the product of human effort and that they can be changed or even abolished if we will, we regard them as final and absolute. We accept them almost as unconsciously and uncritically as the air we breathe. Scarcely anyone has deemed it necessary to peer beneath the implicitly accepted thing we call the institution, whose purpose is regarded as the inexorable purpose of Society, in order to gain a glimpse of the acts and purposes of individuals beneath. Nor is there any considerable evidence that we are changing in this respect. Just as we have ordered our previous living through the notion of institutions, without asking ourselves what institutions are, so we are now projecting our institutional planning for the future, oblivious, meanwhile, to the meaning of institutional behavior in the lives of individuals themselves.

A realistic study of institutional behavior is sorely needed at the present time. Our preoccupation with our institutions as the only practicable realities with which we have to deal, the limiting of research and discussion to the merits of this institution as compared with that, the neglect of individuals in our impetus to satisfy the needs of Society,—these distortions of emphasis have made us short-sighted and have thrown our perspective out of line. Many observers interpret our present problems as arising from a discrepancy, or lag, between the accelerated development of our institutions in some particulars and their retardation in others. Some also assume the difficulty to lie in the gap between the rapid progress of our material culture and our slower per-

fection of those institutional habits necessary for using the new tools without friction. It is considered, in any case, that social progress is to be achieved essentially by the modification of old institutions and the creating of new ones. The details of such reconstruction have been proposed and discussed at great length; numerous defects in our institutions have been pointed out and equally numerous remedies suggested. *Upon the vital question, however, of the nature of institutions themselves almost nothing has been said.*

In the *rationale* of our institutional leadership the emphasis has been upon the side of the purpose to be achieved, rather than upon the lives of those who are achieving it. It has been remote in its consequence, rather than immediate. The working of the institution has often been conceived as more important than the human beings to whom it is supposed to minister. We have been so intent upon utilizing the efforts of individuals, through their institutions, for the improvement of society that we have overlooked the effects of these methods upon the individuals themselves. Little attempt has been made to describe what men and women are actually doing when they coöperate to make their institutions 'work,' or how they fare in the process when all their needs and potentialities as individuals are taken into account. Our leaders have built up institutions; but they have been oblivious to the problems of institutional behavior.

This blindness to one-half of the problem of human adjustment has affected not only our social practice but our social theory as well. Inasmuch as the attention of leaders has been devoted so largely to institutions (as though these were the only possible agencies through which to work) many teachers and scholars have been led into believing that institutions are explicitly denoted, independent realities, existing in the same category with biological organisms and with the objects studied by the physical scientists. Finding no method of putting this assumption to a test, and no way of explicitly encountering an institution, yet feeling constrained, both in their teaching and by their reputation as social scientists, to give a clear and objective definition, some of these students have resorted to the long discredited method of the 'armchair.' It is this attempt to substitute 'pure



reason' regarding institutions for the contacts of explicit experience which explains that sorry output of abstractions, tautologies, and metaphors to which I have previously referred. Challenging as these failures should have been, they have been quickly passed over; and their authors have slipped quietly back into the more comfortable approach where definitions are accepted 'implicitly,' and explicit contact with one's materials is not required. Having paid their respects to the duty of defining one's terms, they have hastened to cross over into the other pathway, that in which we accomplish things *through* institutions and do not trouble ourselves about what institutions *are*. With this gesture the whole problem has been side-stepped; the institutional behavior of individuals has been ignored. Brought back to 'institutions' as the all-absorbing and sufficient reality, we are prevented from regarding them in their relation to the world of our more explicit experience, or from appraising their value to those human beings of whose behavior they are a part.

## II

Unfortunate indeed have been the consequences of this one-sided approach. The ideology of government, industry, and education which we have set up has made it peculiarly difficult to view social questions from the standpoint of individuals. Since there is no provision for the latter approach, any improvement or solution which is proposed must be directed first towards the objective of making our institutions operate more smoothly, and only indirectly, if at all, to the welfare or self-expression of individuals. The whole scene of responsibility and human values seems to have shifted from men and women in the concrete to Society in the large. We are tending to drive from our lives our former face to face relations with our fellows, and to envisage human living as the processes of the great society. And in keeping with the outward practices, there has grown up a philosophy in which our values are centered in institutions as super-human realities, agencies which we accept uncritically as controlling and directing our human existence.

I am well aware of the argument that society is today so vast and so complicated that we cannot work in any other terms

*except* those of institutions. But I hold, nevertheless, that it has been a mistake to ignore, so completely as we have done, the view of our social problems as the crucial needs of individuals, and to attempt their envisagement entirely in terms of institutional agencies and adjustments. The fact that our manner of living has become so complicated that we can see men and women only in the mass does not justify us in *dealing with them* only in the mass. It does not excuse us for tying our own hands and narrowing our gaze so that we can provide only for segments of individuals' interests rather than the needs of their whole personalities. Such a condition is, rather, an argument for trying to reduce our treatment of 'society' from these mass aggregates back once more into a treatment of individuals. Instead of accepting 'society' fatalistically and trying to adjust ourselves to it, it lies within our power to keep our own values as individuals and adjust society to ourselves. For after all, we really care nothing about society, or the mass, *as such*, but only about the individuals who compose it. They alone, so far as human knowledge goes, have life and hope; only in them can be found the values which seem to make life worth living.

Meanwhile the institutionalists' effort to envisage the mass, an effort which has all but deified institutions and has cajoled us into thinking that they are entities like rocks and trees, has landed us in the most inextricable confusion. This is a result wholly to be expected. For when we ignore individuals by assuming that their interests are identical with the alleged purposes of institutions, we are likely to be startled by finding that carefully planned institutions may exist in the same society with some very misguided and wretched men and women. And so, at the present moment, we find that while our 'societal' experts are dallying with institutions and telling us how to coöperate through them so that they will solve our problems, the individuals of society are faced with harassing and well-nigh insoluble dilemmas. Citizens, for example, are implored to solve their problems by voting, through the institution of an enlightened, democratic government; yet regardless of whether they go to the polls or not, they find that voting is no longer an effective instrument for controlling social and economic conditions, that in the complexity

of modern institutional practices they cannot foresee even the consequences of their own vote, and that the whole notion of popular government as the self-expression of a free people has become practically a fiction. The heads of various governments, to take another example, have called together assemblies of nations and disarmament conferences. This is the noble challenge of our 'institutions.' But we still have wars and threats of wars; because, while our institutional leaders cry for peace as between Nations, we, as individuals profiting through national sovereignty, have never allowed ourselves seriously to contemplate the price of peace. In our economic difficulties the same dilemmas and contradictions are manifest. Technological leaders, working through the institutions of capital and industry, promise an abundant leisure for society; but they have provided for individuals, in their perfect machine age, little opportunity or incentive to do anything useful with their leisure when they have it. Though assured by these institutional experts that machine industry will reduce the toil of workers and will give them life more abundantly, we actually find that it is robbing workers of their security and making it difficult for them to maintain life at all. The doctrine of 'rugged individualism' and 'economic law,' the gospel of our economic institutions, has directed business men to compete, to forge ahead, to widen their markets, to enlarge their organization and to induce people through advertising to consume more and more. Yet instead of reaping the prosperity which was promised from this enhancement of business institutions, we now find ourselves in the throes of a colossal depression. And again we see that leaders working under the spell of institutions as modes of progress have led us into a morass from which we are left as individuals to flounder as best we may. In vain do our country's leaders now call upon men and women to 'support their institutions' and to carry us through by their 'noble characters' as individuals. Business men are afraid to strike out for 'normal' trade, credit, and investment; yet are almost certainly doomed if they do not. Institutional experts prescribe one course, and the psychology of men and women demands another. People are urged to buy 'normally' and release money for circulation; yet normal caution tells each citizen to cease mortgaging his future with

installment purchases, to relieve himself from financial pressure, and even to hoard his little savings against impending disaster. Without spending, say our institutionalists, we cannot recover; but if we do spend, we may, as individuals, end in bankruptcy and starvation.

Wherever we turn we are faced by such baffling paradoxes as these. And yet we go on pinning our faith upon the belief that institutions have the same kind of reality as men and women, and that, being far wiser than we, they can direct us all to safety if we but trust them and let them alone. When these assumptions fail, we try again under the spell of the same illusion. For the wreckage of our old organizations we substitute, not a restored confidence and a deeper insight toward individuals, but the same old institutional structure rebuilt. Rearing themselves in the background through calm and through storm, are 'Our Country's Institutions'; and our faith in their foundations cannot be shaken, no matter how ominously their walls may totter. But institutions, alas, have never proved themselves to be either fortresses, guardians, or protective Beings of any sort, but only implicitly formulated systems of organization which are known to us only in terms of the purpose they are designed to fulfill, and which, in their failure to satisfy that purpose, become as real and intelligible as myths. And like myths, if taken as guides to action, they will lead us only to further futility and chaos.

### III

In so far as these institutional fictions have been accepted by the people, the prestige of institutional leaders has been correspondingly enhanced. Citizens may know their own individual desires, but only the experts, they feel, and the official leaders, can understand the complex problems of the country's institutions. These leaders must therefore be given a free hand and supported by the unquestioning acquiescence of individual citizens. Through this process the head of an institution of government, business, education, or religion often becomes invested with an authority which as an individual personality he could scarcely have hoped to gain. The incompetence, pettiness, bias, and even tyranny of many such leaders have been overlooked, or even re-

garded as virtues, so long as the leaders draped themselves in the robes of institutional symbolism and purported to speak not as individuals, but as mouthpieces of institutions.

Let us consider the example of a university president who forces the resignation of a teacher known to possess radical views, upon the ground that such an action is 'for the best interest of the institution.' It is possible, of course, that the professor in question, through some peculiarity not related to the unconventionality of his views, may have become a genuine hindrance to those who are concerned in the work of teaching and learning at that particular place. The asking of such an individual to leave would be an act which would scarcely merit our censure. Nevertheless we must discriminate carefully; for a maze of bigotry and selfishness may be hidden beneath that alluring symbol, 'the interest of the institution.' In some cases it may be a disguise to conceal the hand of certain powerful trustees or the effort of the administrator to curry favor with wealthy patrons or influential alumni. Or again, this formula may be merely a rationalization for a personal bias, or perhaps a sincere conviction on the part of the president himself by virtue of which he finds himself in disagreement with the professor in question.

But aside from all questions of motive, what, in strict logic, is the meaning of such a phrase as 'the best interest of the institution'? Shall we not put ourselves in the place of the young instructor who met this statement by inquiring naïvely what the institution is? The experienced reality of a university mainly consists, as we have already shown, of the common and reciprocal habits of teachers, students, and administrative officials. From the standpoint of an administrator, to act for the good of the institution would probably mean to control academic conditions in such a manner that these habits of teaching and studying would not be interfered with, but would continue to function at that particular place and in association with that particular name and symbol of a 'university.' To this end there must be fostered not only coöperation among teachers and students, but the favorable regard of the people of the community. The good will of present and prospective financial donors must be cultivated, as well as the confidence of parents who, in the future, may send

their sons or daughters to that place of learning. Now any expression of views which runs sharply counter to conventional beliefs is bound to arouse in the administrator the disquieting fear that the settled, coöperative habits of all these supporters may be disrupted. Should that misfortune occur, the educational activity which is now going on at that place might have to cease. An honored tradition would lapse; professors would lose their present livelihood; and alumni, as graduates of a defunct school, might suffer in their social status and self-esteem. And, most important of all, the opportunity for young men and women to receive a higher education at that particular place and under the symbol of that university would be at an end.

But does all this really justify an administrator who dismisses a colleague on no other ground than his unconventional opinions, and defends his action as for 'the institution's good?' Does not the force of this excuse rest upon the assumption that the interest of all concerned can best be served only if capital, equipment, teachers, and students can be made to flow continually towards this particular spot and can be assembled under the name of this particular university? And may not this emphasis upon tradition and locale become unwisely exaggerated? For, after all, the donors, the students, the professors, and even the president himself might 'disband' and go elsewhere to carry forward their purpose of education. Professors might even meet students in small informal groups, as in Plato's day, and carry on the work of instruction with no recognizable university at all. The habits which make up the routine at a particular college, as well as its buildings and the prestige of its name, are essentially tools. They are not ends but only means; they are the formal aspect of the educational process which can never become its content. Though conceding, as we must, a certain value to these formal aspects, we cannot help but feel that the content of what is taught, the personalities whom the student encounters, and the ideas exchanged are things of more vital and lasting significance. In a conflict between these interests of content and that of preserving institutional patterns, should not the latter rather than the former be sacrificed.

The exaggerated emphasis upon the institutional approach is,

of course, no more pronounced in education than in other fields. The same error has contributed toward making our system of political representation the ineffective thing it is today. In the nominating of candidates for our highest offices, the first consideration of convention leaders seems to be their potentialities for pulling together the various discordant factions of the party. In political meetings one hears not so much of individuals as of the noble ideals and illustrious record of the Party, a most elastic symbol which is made to cover the achievements of its great leaders as its own achievements, while excluding the deeds of its scoundrels as the vagaries of certain perverse and wanton individuals who have turned traitor to the cause. If the present practice of subordinating individual leadership to the preservation of the institution should prevail, all the positions of high influence in our country, whether they be political, economic, educational, or moral may become filled by opportunists and men of meaner parts, who conceal their lack of ability or courage beneath the sheltering banner of their institution. Real builders, artists, scientists, and philosophers, will be ruled out. Our entire policy will be directed toward the suppression of excellence and the enforcement of mediocrity in public and private life.

In church and denominational procedure, the leaders' purposes of organization are frequently placed ahead of the religious interests of individuals at large. In many churches today the minister has been selected not so much because of his character or the clearness, force, and originality of his convictions, as because of the fact that he is 'safe' and 'moderate,' or that he can be counted upon to hold dissenting factions of the congregation together and to 'build up the church' into a flourishing institution. The success of such a minister's labors is often measured by the number of members he adds to the church rolls, the regularity of their attendance, the size of their subscriptions, and the power which he, in the name of his church, is able to wield in the community. Church committeemen, on the other hand, who choose a man purely for his intellectual and moral qualities, ignoring his ability as an institution-builder, are sometimes 'repaid by a smaller enrollment, greater consequent financial burdens, diminished 'church' prestige, and the lack of solidarity or 'church con-

sciousness' within the congregation. Yet in spite of all these dangers to 'the institution,' the members of such a church may secure a greater help and satisfaction than would be possible under a leader of the other type. For those who place content ahead of form, and individual values ahead of institutionalized purpose, the church as such may disappear, for the very reason that it has become interwoven and indissolubly united with the lives of those who are its members.

Institutional idolatry not only pervades much of the outer form of living; it strikes deeply into human sentiment as well. The names by which organized groups and institutions are denoted are symbols capable of stimulating powerful emotions. With these symbols many of us have identified our own ideals and our aspirations. When they are praised we feel a personal elation; when they are attacked or dishonored we experience anger or humiliation. Upon them our self-esteem and our moral well-being are felt largely to depend. Now this projection of the self-evaluation of individuals upon their institutions has perils which are perhaps as menacing as the ideology of institutional leaders, with which, indeed, they are closely connected. In the first place, there is encouraged by this process a fictitious and unworkable conception of human values. We neglect the sounder training which we might receive in the expression of our ideals through the actual give-and-take of family and community life, and gaze upon the virtues with which, in imagination, we drape our institutions. We think of morals not in terms of the daily conduct of individuals, but in terms of collective abstractions. It is Our Country which is regarded as liberal, high-minded, and peace-loving; we do not feel so keenly the need to prove these qualities in ourselves. It is Our Church which is endowed with a divine character of which we, by our mere membership, may partake. Institutionally projected virtues are also considered as absolute. We think of them as established in some ideal realm, immune from human contamination, and unchangeable for all time. For a code of ethics bearing upon the facts of life, such an idolatry of institutional virtues is indeed a poor substitute. We are evading the test of ourselves as individuals by lip-service to our collective symbols.



## IV

Though admitting the dangers of our preoccupation with institutions to the disregard of individuals, those who think mainly in terms of the former will remonstrate that the cure lies not in a return to the individual, but in envisaging the needs of the individual and society in one indissoluble unity. For life today, they will argue, is lived in this highly institutional fashion. Not all of us may like this situation; but it is a fact, nevertheless, which all of us will have to accept. Societal realities are for us as genuine, sure, and as permanent as the hills. One cannot separate the individual from society; for he is the product no less of his cultural inheritance than of his biological ancestry. It will not do, these critics protest, to employ the notion of social institutions merely as a map through which to locate the individuals whose behavior we are to study, and thereafter throw the map aside. When we have found these individuals, we still must keep in mind the purpose of the institution in which they function; otherwise their behavior, even as individuals, becomes meaningless. For modern men and women live and act, not as isolated creatures, but collectively and institutionally.

Advocates of this view may revert to my own illustration of the electric circuit, and may point out that unless we understand and keep before us the purpose of the battery-system as a whole, the action of the parts of the battery, and indeed the parts themselves, will be quite unintelligible to us. These parts would never have been put together in such a combination, they would never be brought to function together as they do, were it not for that purpose of generating a current which is implicit in the construction of the battery as a whole. Similarly with the individuals in society; we cannot understand or account for what they are collectively doing—nor would they, indeed, be functioning coöperatively as at present—were it not for the organization of society itself and the purpose embodied in its institutions.

This ingenious argument, which one finds throughout much of our current social teaching, is supported by observations which, in their literal sense, are true. It is fraught, however, with deeper implications which are profoundly false and misleading. Unable

to see any reality except our institutional structure, its proponents have overlooked the entire approach which the physical and biological scientists represent. It will be argued of course that men's behavior, at least at present, must be seen in relation to society and institutions in order to be understood; and that we are therefore obliged to consider individuals and society as inseparably bound together. But this, I would reply, is so not by any necessity known to human knowledge. What is the true reason why, in any program of amelioration or of future development, we seem forced to think always in terms of society and institutions? Is it because men are institution builders by 'instinct,' hence no other manner of progress is possible? Is it because human nature and conditions can be modified only through institutional channels,—because institutions are implicit in the logic of the universe? Or is it, perhaps, only because we *now have* institutions, and have them on such a profuse and elaborate scale? Is it because we are, as individuals, so controlled by our own habits of institutional organization that we can scarcely think in any other terms?

But let us examine the institutionalists' argument upon its own ground. Was their inference from the analogy of the battery a logical one? While it is true that without a comprehension of the battery as a whole we cannot understand the rôle played by its parts, such a statement applies only to the practical function of these parts in generating a current for human use. The *materials* of the parts themselves and the physical laws of their action can certainly be investigated, and we can learn a great deal about them, without any previous knowledge of the battery whatsoever. It would be presumptuous, because men had fabricated, for a cultural purpose, the invention we call a battery, to deny the entire approach of the physical sciences in the realm of electrical phenomena. Whether one knew how to use the battery as a battery or not, and even though one failed to comprehend the use of a single one of its parts, the parts themselves would still remain. They could, as natural, physical, objects, be handled, investigated, generalized about, and predicted from, quite as readily as before.

The case is similar with human beings, who function as 'parts'

in the institutional pattern of society. Even though the observer neglects the institution entirely and loses all comprehension of its structure and purpose, the individuals will still remain; and there will remain, moreover, an important approach from which these individuals can be studied, and studied even as they are performing their institutional activities. There will remain to be noted, for example, the physiological and bio-chemical laws of their bodily functions, as well as important aspects of their behavior and their life histories as biological organisms. The effects of the institutional behavior itself upon the vital economy and behavior of an organism can be investigated quite apart from any comprehension of the purpose of the institution as such. This would be true in exactly the way that physical changes in the materials of a battery produced through prolonged use 'as a battery' would exist and could be investigated in relation to the parts themselves, even though the investigator had not the slightest knowledge of what a 'battery' is.

To take a simple illustration, let us consider the salute of the hand which a private soldier in the army gives to his superior officer. It is true that we cannot know the full meaning of this gesture unless we understand the institutions of government and army discipline and the purpose of instilling in subordinates the deference and obedience which are necessary to their functioning. It is also true that this gesture would probably not be made by soldiers today were it not for the particular historical development through which 'military institutions' have passed. Nevertheless, even though the observer understands nothing whatsoever about government, discipline, or armies, even though he be entirely ignorant of the social purposes, customs, or history explaining why the soldier's hand is raised to his hat, the fact remains that the hand is raised. Energy is expended and tissue changes are produced in the soldier's body. If moreover, the act occurs repeatedly, with too short an interval between repetitions, boredom, fatigue, or emotional irritation may follow, events which have their reactions upon the soldier's bodily condition and general behavior. When repeated a certain number of times the act may serve as a wholesome form of exercise; when carried to extreme limits it may not only produce exhaustion, but may in-

terfere with other activities which are necessary in order for the soldier to maintain his usefulness or even his life.<sup>1</sup> All these changes can be noted, and valid and useful inferences can be drawn, even though the observer should be totally ignorant of the custom or etiquette of saluting, or of political and military institutions, or even of institutions and society altogether.<sup>2</sup>

This illustration, though of slight importance in itself, can be repeated for every field where human beings are engaged in institutional activities. It is true that a large part (though by no means the whole) of human behavior is institutional in character. It is also conceded that the purpose of such behavior in its societal import cannot be understood apart from the institutions of which it forms a part. But such a concession, after all, is merely a tautology. It is equivalent to saying that the institutional significance of human behavior cannot be understood without a knowledge of institutions. The fact that there are important non-institutional forms of behavior and important ways of regarding institutional behavior other than from the societal viewpoint, is overlooked. And it is not until we have, for a time, entirely forgotten the institutional meaning and purpose of behavior, and turned our attention to the thing which individuals are doing as *biological organisms*, that is, as creatures having their individual characteristics, desires, and purposes, that we can gain a full view of the potentialities and problems of collective life.

To say, therefore, that individuals cannot be understood or studied separately from institutional society is a pretension which

---

<sup>1</sup> It is conceded, of course, that the point at which certain deleterious changes (anger, annoyance, etc.) would become noticed in the behavior of the soldier might depend upon the customary respect with which obedience and discipline were regarded in that particular society, in other words, upon institutional factors. This, however, does not invalidate our statement that organic and behavioral changes *are present* and that, in some of their aspects, they can be studied independently of the 'institution' to which they are related.

<sup>2</sup> Military commanders themselves have recognized the importance of these basic *non-institutional* aspects of the institutional behavior of individuals, and have devised regulations to permit the cessation of military courtesies and discipline at certain times and under certain conditions. They have learned, in other words, that human beings not only can, but must, be regarded at times not as a part of any institution, but simply as individuals.

confuses the realm of our subjective, implicit experience with the world with which we have explicitly to deal. In consequence of this confusion explicitly encountered individuals tend to be minimized or hidden from view, and the more intangible, implicit, experience through which institutions are conceived is substituted in their place. Although we probably cannot study institutions, in an explicit sense, as apart from individuals; we can (and, if we are to get anywhere, we *must*) study individuals as apart from institutions. And we must so study them even while they are performing those activities which, from another standpoint, we would characterize as institutional. I cannot share the conviction, therefore, of those who classify individuals (as whole, organic beings) in the same category with those segmental habits of individuals which make up institutions. I cannot join those whose gaze is fixed upon a closed circle of the individual and society. Though conceding that every individual is profoundly affected by the habits he learns from those about him, some of which may be traced back for many generations, though granting that these 'societal' habits can be understood neither historically nor as methods of purposive social adjustment without reference to an institutional pattern, I deny, nevertheless, that individuals are completely absorbed into this societal circle, or that they are fully described and accounted for by their relation to the cultural and institutional pattern in which they live.

A human being and an institution cannot form a closed circle, for they are not of the same type of reality. An individual can be encountered explicitly, directly observed, experimented with, and studied. An institution is capable only of being implicitly experienced. It cannot be defined as a result of encountering it; it must be postulated by some abstract or analogical definition. It cannot be observed, analyzed, or experimented with except inferentially, that is, by interpreting the things we do to individuals as though they were being done to institutions. The study of an individual leads us into the field of personality and unique behavior, and into the elementary sciences of physiology, chemistry, and physics, realms where we are firmly and explicitly rooted at all points in the world about us. The consideration of institutions leads us into metaphysical postulate, social teleology, customs,

rules, relationships, and patterns. It takes us upon a quest, not to discover things as they are, but to find ways in which things may be made to work together for ulterior ends.

These contrasts do not exhaust the differences which set the reality of individuals off from that of institutions. An important difference exists upon the side of teleology, or purpose, itself. When we say, for example, that an *individual* has a purpose, this statement is likely to be acceptable at its face value. It is self evident; or it may be readily tested by observing or dealing with the individual concerned. When we refer, however, to the purpose of an *institution* or to the purpose of Society as realized *through institutions*, such a purpose can be only inferentially or metaphorically understood. We must mean either the purposes of the specific individuals spoken of as operating collectively through the institutional pattern, or else the purpose of some imaginary Being, the 'institution' personified. In either instance there is slight possibility of checking the truth of the inference by a resort to facts; and in both cases we are in danger of being misled into accepting, as the purpose of an 'institution,' a purpose which either does not exist at all, or else exists in a disguised manner as the motive of a few individuals who are in power.

In the face of these differences, how can it be seriously maintained that individuals and institutions form together a closed circle in which the behavior of the former can be witnessed only from the societal standpoint? It seems clear that, no matter how closely the two realms are related, the circle is definitely broken through upon the side of individuals. Through individuals we are led back, as by bridges, from implicit philosophizing about society to the world of explicit contact with plants, stones, animals, and men. And when we study individuals in their own light we enter deeply into such explicit experience with our world. We experience a directness also of individuals' purposes, a uniqueness of temperaments and of personalities, and a personal value in the realms of art, philosophy, religion, and science. Were we to confine ourselves to the closed circle in which individuals are perceived only as aspects of society, all these distinctions would be unappreciated, if not, indeed, unseen.

## V

Leaving, therefore, the closed circle of individual and society to those to whom it seems important, I shall endeavor, while dealing still with the immediate scene of institutional behavior, to portray it from the standpoint of individuals alone. Instead of picturing a Society trying to solve, through its institutions, the problems of mankind, we shall attempt here to see specific men and women trying to solve their own problems through the behavior which they call their institutions. Instead of describing the work which institutions are supposed to do and the scheme of coöperation through which individuals work, our attention will be upon the movements, feelings, and desires of the individuals themselves, and upon the consequences of these reactions in all the fullness and variety of their individual lives. While others are proposing changes which should be made in the functioning of particular institutions, we shall question the serviceability of institutions themselves as a method of adjustment. Instead of suggesting a new system of politics or new form of international polity, this book will deal with the political behavior of men and women, and the motives which they are expressing in their present political and national alignments. Leaving to others the use of our institutions for 'social and economic planning,' we shall attempt only an analysis of what individuals are doing when the 'plan,' the 'institutions,' or the 'laws of economics,' are said to work. We shall present no institutional substitutes for our disappearing family life, but only a picture of the acts and purposes of individuals under the old familial relationships as contrasted with the new. The question of how schools and colleges should be run will not concern us, nor even the efficiency of the various methods of teaching; but we shall give thought to the behavior of the students as they are being educated, the behavior of teachers as they instruct, and the significance of these behaviors in the lives of the individuals concerned. Though saying little about churches, creeds, or religions as such, we shall ask what personal religion and institutional worship can mean in attitudes of individuals toward life as a whole. In all these queries, following the method previously described, we shall use the familiar

institutional concepts, such as state, government, nation, law, business, industry, family, school, and church, solely for the purpose of maps or sign-posts to orient us toward the fields of human action concerned. Once these fields have been identified we shall ignore the institution and turn our attention at once upon the individuals before us. Their dilemmas, not those of their institutions, will be our chief concern; we shall seek the significance of their behavior not in fulfilling the institutional purpose or in making the institution work, but in living their lives as human beings in the fullest sense of the term.

In treading these unfamiliar pathways my claim to the reader's confidence lies not in the rôle of an experienced guide, but merely in that of a fellow-explorer who has sought tentatively to mark out a little of the road ahead. The accurate, comprehensive study of institutional behavior is manifestly a task for the future. In these feeble beginnings I have fallen far short of the ideal of an objective, thorough, and scientific description. Meager, fragmentary, and occasional is the evidence upon which my analyses are based; nor do I claim that its appraisal is wholly free from bias. If I have made any contribution, it is probably merely that of a new approach, an opening up of new territory for further exploration.

It may seem to the reader that some of the essays following lack even the character of objective, scientific description. I speak frequently in terms of values, ideals, and purposes, quite after the manner of those whose approach to institutions I am challenging. This criticism I admit. My account is fully as normative, didactic, and persuasive as it is descriptive. In extenuation, only this can be said: the purposes and ideals to which I refer are never, so far as I am aware, those purely of institutions or of society; they are always values of individuals. They are in terms of the many rather than the one; they are relative rather than absolute, dynamic rather than static. They are not embodied in some societal matrix from which the individual is scarcely differentiated; they are, on the contrary, purposes of unique personalities, of individuals, who, unlike institutions, can respond and be responded to, who can yield us proof that the purpose of which we are speaking is truly theirs. And if I exhort, it is not with the aim that men



shall pursue a particular virtue or a stated program, but only that these purposes, the unique interests, traits, and potentialities of individuals may have freedom for their expression. I have tried to urge the attainment not of the Absolute Good or the Perfect Society, but of as many different good lives as there are human beings to live them, each expressing those values toward which a particular individual aspires. In so far as I have succeeded there need be no apology for what follows.

---

---

### III

#### THE GOOD LIFE—IS IT AN INDIVIDUAL OR A SOCIETAL GOAL?

---

---

ON THE MORNING of July 4, 1927, the routine of Sing Sing Prison was disturbed by a tragic accident. The inmates were taking their exercise in the prison yard overlooking the Hudson River, when a canoe bearing three young men with supplies and equipment for a picnic came unsteadily down the river, the surface of which was roughened by a fresh wind. When near the prison pier the canoe capsized. Convicts who saw the incident moved, as if by impulse, toward the three figures who were struggling in the water. Apparently unable to swim the youths were clinging to the sides of the overturned craft and calling for help. Six of the prisoners volunteered, even begged with tears in their eyes, for permission to swim out to the rescue; but the keepers, who carried rifles in their hands, would not allow it. According to the warden himself, the guards had to threaten to shoot the prisoners in order to keep them back. One by one the victims, their strength ebbing and their cries dying away, sank into the river and disappeared. It was reported that the incident produced a profound depression throughout the prison, dampening the holiday spirit which might otherwise have prevailed.

In a perfectly organized society affairs usually run smoothly. Institutions, both economic and political, when times are normal, appear to work automatically for the general maintenance and security. Life does not have to be protected by romantic deeds of heroism. But every once in a while something unexpected happens; some situation arises for which no provision has been made. At such times there spring to the rescue the peculiar initiative, versatility, and courage which can be found neither in industrial machinery nor in dissociated institutional habits, but only in entire living, human creatures. We are then reminded that life is not yet completely standardized and that there is still a place for the unique and the individual. It is at these points, which are

often the crises in human affairs, that the conflict must be waged between routine institutional habits and the values of men and women as individuals. Sometimes the individual wins; and the institutions, as we say, are compelled to change. Again, as on that morning in Sing Sing Prison, institutional habits are given full control.

But what could have been done? Here were the keepers bound by their honor and by the law to guard the prisoners in their charge. No discretion in the matter had been given them, nor could any be given without endangering the entire discipline of the prison. The duty of the guards to 'society' was the maintaining of our penal system whatever the cost to particular individuals. True enough. But we must also face the stark fact that three human beings were drowned within easy rescuing distance of those who made no effective move to help. That system which is supposed to prevent criminals from injuring society and possibly to reform them operated, in this instance, to keep them from doing a humane act, an act to which they were spurred by some of the strongest and most altruistic impulses of mankind. The case is not an easy one to decide. In view of our social organization as it now exists, we cannot blame the prison sentries for failing to see their way out of the dilemma. They had to choose between sacrificing the lives of certain particular individuals and the established habits upon which social order and security are considered to be based. The conflict lay between the organization of habits which makes for a stable 'society' and the freedom of individuals to act according to their personal values. The problem does not admit of any immediate solution. No exact provision for such an emergency could have been foreseen and fore-ordained by authorities for inclusion within the institutional regulations and routine. The only way out of the difficulty lies in a more fundamental questioning and appraisal of institutionalism itself, of the social philosophy which has given rise to such dilemmas.

Some one will probably object that my selection of the prison episode as an illustration was unfortunate. Criminals are not in a full sense members of society, but are more like enemies who are beyond the pale. As a small minority who have sacrificed the

right to live as other people, they must not only be prevented from doing further evil, but must expect to lose their opportunity for doing good. Institutions, it will be argued, on the whole further, rather than hamper, moral freedom. My example, I admit was somewhat extreme. Many other instances, however, could be cited. On November 13, 1928, the people of the civilized world were shocked by the news of one of the worst maritime disasters of recent years, the foundering of the ship *Vestris* off the coast of Virginia Capes. This tragedy was attributed by many to the stupidity, neglect, selfishness, or cowardice of certain persons in charge. What interests us here, however, is not the allocation of responsibility, but certain attitudes which may have motivated the persons who were responsible. In answer to numerous critics, there was published in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* on December 7 of that year a defense of the officers both of the *Vestris* and of other vessels to whose delinquency the disaster had been charged. Following a statement concerning the captain's justification in trying to get his ship straight unaided and the question of chivalry in the use of life boats, the article continues:

The question now arises, What is the duty of a ship, heavily loaded, bound east for Cardiff, let us say, when she picks up a call from a vessel 150 miles behind her who is seeking aid? She has a duty to her owners and her charterers, and for that matter to her own personnel. She may have neither the speed nor the seaworthiness to manoeuvre close to a foundering vessel in a heavy gale. She may suffer damage in the attempt to fight the weather. The present writer crossed the Atlantic a few months ago in a 23,000-ton liner. Three days out from Europe, in a howling western ocean gale, she received a call from a steamer to the westward, but off her course. She changed her course and pounded at full speed into the wildest of September storms. Word then came that a German liner was standing by the ship, and anyway she was not in great danger. Our liner resumed her voyage, but in the course of that abortive 'errand of mercy' she had had her forward coaming smashed and driven on to the forward winches—smashing them as well—she had lost her steerage galley-stack, and one of the pins that swing the cargo booms, four inches round steel, had been snapped like a carrot.

Now, besides the coal burned, who is to pay for all this?

**Ships are commercial enterprises, not romantic vehicles of sentiment.<sup>1</sup>**

Here again, the defenses raised by the champions of institutions as against individual initiative and heroism are difficult to undermine. If we accept social organization as it is, we must admit that the readiness to rescue a fellow vessel in peril invites danger and loss, not only to the immediate personnel, but to merchants, ship-owners, insurance companies, and investors in large numbers. Interlocked as we all are in the complex economic system of society, there is no room for the enterprise of a few adventurous spirits who might, by a well-meant though ill-advised action, jeopardize the welfare of thousands. The day of individual heroism is passed. But here again, in the case of the *Vestris*, the hard fact remains that scores of people went to their death under circumstances which might, in some other system, have been avoided. One of the most fundamental human impulses, that of saving a human life, was thrust aside; the security of goods and economic habits was preserved. The failure to solve the difficulty is not due to our dullness at the moment it is presented, but to our habits of social organization which makes us creatures of these unanswerable dilemmas.

## II

So far as explicit human experience can go, society, of course, is nothing other than the totality of the individuals of whom it is composed. But while, in theory, it is supposed to embrace the totality of the life processes, interests, and desires of every individual, society as it is represented in the practice of institutional leaders is something very different. It consists for them not of the whole of every individual, but of certain segments only, certain common interests together with the common, institutional habits which have been developed in the population to protect these interests. When officials establish a Federal Reserve, a tariff, or a public utilities commission, they do so in the name of the society which they are supposed to represent. But the society, taken in this sense, is not the totality of every being within it. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Information Service* (Department of Research and Education, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America), December 29, 1928.

Federal Reserve loans facilitate only a certain phase for example, the financial aspects of the lives of farmers. Other aspects of their lives neither this agency of government nor any other may be able to support. The tariff procedure aids the industrial and commercial habits of manufacturers; it does not represent an expression of the values of manufacturers as whole individuals, nor does it foster even the economic aspect of life within certain other classes. Society in this sense consists of interests which are a part of many individuals (of some usually more than of others); and yet it fully includes nobody. A totally inclusive society, which would be the same as all the individuals in their full biological and psychological reality, would be far too complex and unwieldy to be used for purposes of concerted leadership, representation, or control. The wholeness of life within any community, large or small, has no handle by which it can be manipulated.

Now there are two types of ethicists among social students. The one type see the highest good in terms of the welfare and conduct of separate individuals, the other in terms of society as a whole. The individual and society, though identical as an ideal, are, as we have shown, usually different in practice. For this reason the implications of an ethics of 'society' will differ from those of an ethics of 'individuals.' The highest good of society must mean, if it is to be definite and workable, a conception of the good life as realized in a system of perfectly adjusted social institutions. It represents an order which affords the maximum satisfaction of those needs and interests to which one can minister through social organization; but which satisfies certain needs common to a great number rather than the total array of needs peculiar to any given individual. The highest good from an individual standpoint is, on the other hand, something more inclusive, more intimate, and more complex. It means, in the large, the ideals unique and peculiar to each separate individual. It is an individual's own life aim.

But society and the individual personality, so far as practical living is concerned, are both rather vague, intangible notions. Let us lay aside the question of what they *are*, and think of them in the same way that a scientist uses concepts in his investigation of nature—namely, as an aid in making reliable predictions of

events. Regardless of their metaphysical status, these two concepts give us two opposed points of view which have radically different consequences. From either viewpoint we can make certain predictions which, from the other, would be impossible. Both of these types of prediction having a reliability well above chance, afford opportunities for the understanding and guidance of human affairs. But the opportunities are different. From the societal standpoint, for example, by knowing the law of property which prevails in a certain region, we can predict fairly well the behavior of an individual of that region toward a piece of land, an implement, a deed, a ship, or anything which may be said to be owned. We can foretell from the societal viewpoint that an individual appearing on the street will wear clothes, and even that he will wear a collar. We can, in ordinary times, predict with fair certainty that property owners will pay taxes. We can forecast the fact that people will pay their fares upon street cars, or that a certain proportion of citizens in a given political district will vote the Republican ticket or will contribute to an organized charity. All of these predictions are possible because we overlook individual differences and think in terms of uniformities and averages. Our forecast is based upon the fact that human behavior in certain respects is pretty largely the same throughout a given population.

But obviously, such a type of prediction can cover only a part of our experience of our fellows. There is a considerable portion in the lives of men and women which can be predicted only if we know the character or personality of the particular individual concerned. A study of 'society' will enable us to foretell that the behavior of an individual will conform to certain laws regarding property; but it will not help us to predict whether or not a given individual will be likely to acquire property. Neither will it tell us what kind of property he will require, nor the personal use he will make of it. Predictions of this latter type, however, are often possible from a knowledge of an individual's capacities and traits; and while much less reliable than the predictions of physical scientists, they are, nevertheless, of considerable use in the intelligent direction of human affairs. From the societal angle we can predict that an individual will wear a

necktie (because such an adornment is characteristic in his social class); but we must stop there. From the individual viewpoint we might, if we knew the person, predict within fair limits the type of necktie he will wear. From the statistics of a given community we can tell in advance the approximate average contribution to the Community Chest, and what proportion of the citizens will contribute; but only a familiarity with the individuals as whole personalities will help us to foretell the attitudes or contributions of the particular donors, or enable us to predict the changes which they may make in their later contributions. A knowledge of individuals, in fact, will sometimes enable us to foretell exceptional conduct, behavior, that is, which goes directly against the customary expectation. There may be an occasional ship captain who in an emergency will risk large economic losses to his employers rather than endanger the life of a single passenger. We might be able, from a knowledge of the person himself, to forecast such an event. Similarly we can say with fair assurance that certain exceptional individuals, if given an opportunity, will fail to deposit their bus fare or to pay their full taxes. Predictions made upon a societal basis rest upon the standardized conduct, or the likenesses, of individuals; predictions from the individual viewpoint rest upon consistent personal differences. On many occasions we say: "That is just like Mr. X," or "Mr. S, being the man he is, will be sure to say or think so and so." Such an understanding judgment of future conduct is possible not because Mr. X is like everyone else, but precisely because he is different, and different in his own way.

This manner of thinking of society and personality as types of predictable behavior, rather than as souls or as group minds, seems to me at once the soundest and the most workable conception. The physicist uses such terms as 'gravitation' and 'electromagnetism' in a similar way. Just as no one ever was known to see or to touch a 'society' or a 'personality,' so no one has ever encountered directly such things as electricity or the force of gravity. These terms are simply shorthand expressions for more complex formulas describing the manner in which things behave. Likewise, by employing the terms 'society' and 'individuality' we are giving a convenient classification of certain past observations



by the use of which we not only describe those phases of life which exhibit some regularity, but forecast the future and provide a useful guide to present conduct. Confusion arises only when we think of these concepts as entities, societal or personal, which control human events. So far as explicit experience goes, personality and society are not beings or powers. They are known to us, upon the one hand, merely as those acts of behavior which can be predicted only by knowing one individual intimately, and upon the other hand, as those acts which can be predicted by knowing a great many individuals superficially or in part.

The capacity for prediction brings with it the possibility of direction and choice. Here however, we enter the field of values; our problem is an ethical, rather than a scientific one. Independently of scientific aims we must decide upon the kind of life which we think is best, and then try so to arrange the conditions of living as to make that life possible. And in making these arrangements our ability to make predictions of the conduct to which they give rise will be of substantial value. This is so not, to human knowledge, because of any force exerted by the laws we have formulated, but merely because certain events seem to follow others with a kind of regularity. When we know what kind of stimulations precede certain responses, we can employ such stimulations with the fair assurance that the desired behavior will be forthcoming. We can not really control natural events in the sense of wielding a force by which to coerce them; but we can 'set the stage' so that, when these events come to pass, their occurrence will affect us in certain desired ways.

### III

It is at this point that the divergence between the ethics of society and the ethics of individuals becomes significant. If we are interested in the former, the type of prediction we shall use will be that of societal happenings. We shall picture as a goal the most desirable institutions or uniformities of behavior, and we shall seek by a knowledge of the common human tendencies, both native and acquired, to bring such behavior about. If, on the other hand, we consider the highest good to be the cultivation of individuals' personalities (for though individuals develop in a social

environment, each personality is, in many ways, unique), then we shall study the trends exhibited by an individual regardless of any institutional scheme in which he may be functioning, and shall provide for the development of habits which will fit consistently into the growing pattern of that individual's life. We must choose between these two courses if we wish to attain the maximum development of either. It will not do to say that we will so plan our societal institutions as to give the greatest possible freedom for individual development, unless we wish to give up the goal of perfectly integrated institutions and go over to the individualists' position. For the conditions of maximum individual differentiation require not a certain type of planning, so much as an *absence*, or at least a great reduction, of planning. Individuality may be said to thrive only when the goal of a perfectly coördinated, institutionalized society is abandoned. We have seen that, while society and individuals are the same in theory, the society in which organization and institutional leadership are possible is not the same as the total life of the individuals which comprise it. As between the good life to be realized through society and the good life to be realized through individuals we must therefore make our choice. We cannot look for character uniformities and expect to see characteristic differences. We can set the stage for either scene, but we cannot set it for both.

If, for example, our formula for the highest type of society were worked out through an economic viewpoint and emphasis, we should teach individuals, in a uniform manner, the privileges and responsibilities attaching to the use of capital, the division of labor, and the spending of money. Conformity to the economic institutions which have been worked out for the welfare of all is, under this scheme, the ethical goal of human behavior. Under the individualistic ethics, however, such instruction would be relegated to a minor place under the motto "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." In such a system a man might risk the loss of the ship of which he was captain, whether it was owned by himself or others, in order to save human lives. He might give away his money lavishly, rather than invest it in some enterprise which would increase production. Obedience to law becomes, for an institutionalist, an absolute moral duty, a good in itself; though

he would, perhaps, admit that the purpose of laws is ultimately the promotion of individual welfare. To an individualist in ethics obedience to law is a relative, not an absolute, good. Laws, to him, are of no use whatever except as they are instrumental to self-realization among the greatest possible number of individuals; and this goal may sometimes be better approached by disobedience than by obedience.

To train for a societal ethics we employ only simple and uniform stimuli. Little or no variation in the field of choices is permitted. To encourage the search for the highest good through unique personalities, on the other hand, we must provide an almost endless variety of situations. In order to inculcate the standards of an ideal 'society' there must be a functional meeting between individuals and those particular institutional habits of others through which the ideals of society are, as it were, transmitted. In order to promote the development of a unique individual there must be a free mingling with other individuals, not merely in respect to institutional segments of their behavior, but in all the face to face, informal relationships of community or family living. Only complete and differing personalities can provide the context in which personality can be developed. Notwithstanding the popularity of the slogan that the individual and society are one and the same thing and that to work for the one is to work also for the other, the 'society' which can be used by leaders and reformers for practical ends is really *not* the same as the individuals. Still less can we convince ourselves that it is a being which is greater and more inclusive than any individual. It is, rather, a common segment of the individuals' activities. It is an abstract system composed of parts of individuals and not of wholes. And when we are working toward the efficient inter-functioning of these parts we are not directly, but only half consciously and fortuitously, affecting the welfare of the individuals themselves. We are setting the stage for uniformities of action rather than for those variations through which alone the traits of individuals can be expressed. That which happens to the whole, biological person is often a mere accident which we are powerless from our institutional standpoint to prevent or alter.

## IV

Those who take the societal view of ethics have as a goal the creation of an integrated, harmonious, and consistent society in which the creature wants of individuals are satisfied and life becomes stable and secure. The safe-guarding of human welfare is largely divorced from individuals' motives and transferred to society; and 'society' being considered as altruistic is depended upon to take care of its own. The advocates of the individual ethics, on the other hand, picture as the good life that in which personalities, rather than society, become integrated, consistent and harmonious. If we espouse the latter cause, we aim toward the expression of all the various and multiform interests of each individual, rather than toward the expression of a narrow but fundamental group of interests common to all. In reaching this objective it is inevitable that the *common* interests, which are called the 'interests of society,' cannot be so effectively conserved as in the program of the societal ethicist. In order to achieve individuality there must be some occasion for chance and hazard. There must be a relaxing of the uniformity of behavior, with the result that the routine requirements of life will not be so carefully met. Institutional habits, in the very degree to which they offer security, sometimes destroy the opportunity for self-expression. It is when our institutions 'go wrong,' when ships are sinking, that individual values and personal traits emerge in their clearest form. This is the dilemma of our present civilization. While still longing for individual initiative and responsibility, we have progressed, unconsciously perhaps, but steadily, in the direction of an ethics whose reference is primarily to the good of society and only indirectly to the good of individuals.

Those who are seeking the good life through the agency of a perfected society envisage the highest good as something which is absolute; it is the same for all. They also regard it as static and unchanging. Societies, of course, may differ in the degree in which they approximate this goal; but the ideal of the good itself is considered by them as something objective, transcendent, and final. Plato becomes the accepted philosopher of this school. An individualist, on the other hand, leans toward Aristotle. He

envisages the good life as dynamic rather than static, relative rather than absolute. It is a concept which is always changing, even for the individual himself. There is no final, perfect life toward which we are working, but only the manner of living which, at each stage of our development, seems best. The goodness of life, in this view, lies in the living itself, not in the goal toward which, in living, we progress. The good life is not only different at different periods of our existence; it differs also for every individual. There are potentially as many 'best lives' as there are people to live them.

It is not my purpose to offer a new solution of this age old controversy. The predilection for the one philosophy or the other may depend largely upon differences of temperament and training. There have been in the past, and perhaps there always will be, both Platonists and Aristotelians. There is, however, need for clarifying the issue with respect particularly to the trends in our present existence. We need a more complete awareness of the consequences of these two ethical viewpoints, so that our choice between them, or possibly our attempt at their reconciliation, may be more intelligently guided. It is necessary for us to scrutinize our manner of speaking, to test our conceptual implements, so that in attempting our solution of human problems we do not mistake a terminological concealment of one of these concepts for a satisfactory realization of both. Let us not delude ourselves into believing that in a morally ordered society the moral freedom of individuals is necessarily presupposed. Where only a single individual is involved, the doctrine of the objective reality of ethical universals may not hamper freedom; for if a single individual is the only one concerned, the highest good, though regarded as absolute and unchanging, is still a product of that individual's own shaping and choosing. But where great numbers of individuals are organized as a society, these universals, the accepted highest values of living, are taken out of individuals' hands and considered as established in the social order. They no longer are regarded as following from volitions of individuals themselves. Hence a society which, as a form of human association, is alleged to support and harbor the highest ideals may in reality be one

---

in which the ethical freedom of individuals is at a very considerable ebb.

How then do individualists fare in a world where people at large are tending toward a societal standard of ethics? What are the consequences of conceiving 'societal interests' and institutions as forces directing human acts? If institutions are not agents of this sort, how then *are* they related to the motives and desires of men? When people act as parts of institutions, what bearing does their action have upon the welfare of those about them and upon their own personalities? What difference does it make, in specific institutional situations, whether we think of our values as inhering in society or as belonging to individuals? These are some of the questions to which we now turn.



**POLITICAL**





---

---

## IV

### OUR STRAW MAN OF POPULAR GOVERNMENT

---

---

FEW PHENOMENA in America at the present day are more striking than the lack of an effective interest in public affairs. Notwithstanding the shortsightedness of officials and the evidences of corruption which would make most men blush if charged against them personally, Americans, with relatively few exceptions continue to show an appalling lethargy and political indifference. Efforts toward an awakening are being exerted through schools and colleges, and a cry is being raised for training in responsible citizenship; but in spite of these endeavors, the political intelligence and enthusiasm of our citizens seems to be scarcely above the lowest ebb. Except for an occasional national election, even the simple act of voting is neglected by great portions of our people. The appeal to our intelligent young men and women for a useful career in politics has frequently fallen upon barren soil.

Mr. Harold J. Laski has analyzed some of the reasons for the political indifference of American youths, in contrast with the young people of other countries. He stresses such factors as our lack of political tradition, our reasonably grounded cynicism regarding the character of men who go into politics, and the more lurid promise, at present, of a career in bigger business.<sup>1</sup> All these conditions are probably true; but there is, I think, a still more basic reason. The chief explanation of our present political inertia lies, in my judgment, in the attitudes of citizens regarding their institutions, that is, in what they conceive government itself to be. These attitudes are important, for they reflect our entire economic background. They gear in with the habits of this system and serve as a rationalization for them. Such attitudes, moreover, enable citizens to maintain their self-respect in the face of public scandals by the device of attributing these evils not to their own personal ineptitude, but to their political system. Mr. Laski has observed

---

<sup>1</sup> See "Why Don't Your Young Men Care?" *Harpers*, July, 1931, pp. 129-136.

significantly that, in an English university, students discussing political affairs talk about what should be done as though they themselves were the actors on the stage, while in America they discuss what is being done as though they were the audience at a play.

As compared with the citizens of certain other countries the people of the United States seem to regard their institutions with a degree of objective finality which is wholly unwarranted. In this pioneer civilization of which modern American life is a development, we have been content to take our notions of law and government pretty much as they were given us by our European forefathers. We have had little to do, as individuals, with creating them. Governmental functions have run smoothly along under the leaders of the two great parties whose principles have become absurdly similar and whose methods of functioning are equally outmoded. All that an American farmer or tradesman asks is that the market remain dependable, and that he shall be able to secure a living and (in periods of prosperity) expand his business and increase his income. Even our recent presidents have regarded government as something which rolls on automatically if we but let it alone and do not get it mixed up with business or other concerns. From this detached indifference there has arisen the fiction that the government actually is some sort of agency over and above the citizens, a being whose will is made known to men through the mandates of its chosen officials.

There is another difference between political attitudes in America and those elsewhere which is not without significance. In England, although the people bow in reverence before their symbols of class distinction, sovereignty, and nationhood, yet, strangely enough, they are capable also of smiling at these things and at their own subservience toward them. Mr. Laski states that "no people can exist without a faith in its institutions." Can we not take another leaf from the book of his own country and say that, although a *People* cannot exist without faith in its institutions, *individuals*, who are really the people in a deeper sense, cannot exist without the ability, at times, to laugh at their institutions? In the United States I can find no widespread, wholesome amusement of this sort. Most of us seem to me to be in-

stitution worshippers who believe that our government, our Constitution, and our laws (unexplained depressions excepted) have produced an unbounded national prosperity, and that these institutions, therefore, must be preserved immune not only from ridicule but even from criticism.

## II

The idea of a self-sufficient government which is supposed to run the country above the heads of its citizens is not inherent in the process of governance itself. It is, however, a danger to which, in the absence of controversy, that process is continually liable. In the early days of simple economic and social arrangements it might have been possible for governmental activities to be more direct and to afford a greater chance for individual self-expression than is offered today. But as our industrial civilization has become more complex, the theory of the original agrarian democracy championed by Thomas Jefferson has faded out, and great alignments of interest, for the most part economic, have taken its place. These interests are expressed not directly by the individuals concerned, but by their representatives, and more recently by lobbyists and spokesmen of the 'pressure groups' who exert a considerable influence over legislation at present. Inevitably such a vicariousness of expression brings with it the sense of super-individual, personified institutions. As long as individuals are able to speak for themselves there can be no reality upon the horizon except individuals. As soon, however, as this power is delegated to a particular spokesman, the picture changes. Since this representative utters a single voice and pleads only for a single cause, the illusion arises that the many are really *one*. Hence there emerges the fiction of a community, a state, or a nation governing itself through its chosen officials. But for a 'nation' to 'govern itself' does not mean that its individuals govern themselves. It all too often means that all the individuals are governed by a few in the name of a Being called the Nation. Popular government remains in theory the voice of the citizens; but the citizens have now been transmogrified from individuals, living in specific localities, to a great fictitious body, the People, which is supposed to speak with one voice, and to

have one desire. And whatever policy the officials of government may put into effect, such action is accepted as the expression of this great popular will.

The evil of such a conception lies not only in its unreality, but in the fact that behind it may lurk sinister motives. It is forgotten that the acts of 'government' are only the acts of individuals and are therefore as truly subject to folly and to avarice as other human deeds. It is believed that justice, regardless of the bias of judges, is automatically administered through the Governments' courts. Instead of being given an opportunity to express their own wishes, individuals are everywhere called upon to 'support their Government.' As an agency actually representing the individual citizens of the country and responsible to them, popular government has become a myth. It has no more vitality than a man of straw.

The Jeffersonian principle that the government which governs best is the government which governs least is the direct opposite of our present philosophy. In his time there were no such complicated and ramifying systems of interstate communication and transportation as we have today. There were no such corporations and mergers of corporations as methods of controlling economic pursuits throughout the country, and in some cases, throughout the world. Hence there was no need for the task of directing these great organizations to be added to the common objectives which men, as individuals, sought. Now, however, the scene has shifted from individual personalities to these intricate and far-reaching corporate activities. Unsolved problems threaten individual welfare and integrity at every point because we have taken upon ourselves this technological and institutional order. And these issues cannot be dealt with as one harmonizes the desires of individuals; our only recourse is to the training of a corps of experts, municipal managers, city planners, and heads of commissions and bureaus of every sort. The center of gravity has moved from the declaration of individuals' wishes to the conflict of the policies of leaders as to how the great society can be run. All this machinery has, of course, been added to the original interests of men as individual members of the community, so that our present accumulation of laws, administrative orders, agencies,

and forms of control is staggering to contemplate. That government which governs most is the only government which now seems possible.

So far as the people themselves are concerned our present system seems to be a representation not of interests, but of *ideas*. In political campaigns there is no attempt to rely upon a platform of political self-expression for individual men and women, but only upon the argument that this policy or that is the best for the country. A party orator discourses on the benefits sure to flow to the country through a protective tariff, a socialist preaches the necessity of public ownership, a communist holds forth for the ownership of all the tools of industry by workers, a bureaucrat points out the blessings of a Fascist régime. One spokesman may be appealing for proportional representation or a commission form of city government. Another may be proposing agricultural relief, ship subsidy, national disarmament, prohibition enforcement, a new political alignment, or a third party. In every case the question raised is not what do individual citizens want, but what is best for the nation.

Carried to its logical extreme this attitude lands us in a palpable absurdity. If each citizen is to take an active rôle in managing the affairs of the country, who shall be left to have his affairs managed? If we are to forget the trees for the forest, if each of us is to give up the expression of his own need and interest for that which publicists tell us is the interest of the 'country,' then what is to become of popular government? Is the country itself not these very individuals who are thinking and talking about the country? Our political action, under such a formula, has degenerated into a kind of burlesque, in which a straw man, the government, is seen as managing and protecting some amorphous creature known as the 'body politic'; and, in a babble of tongues, we are all trying to tell the straw man what to do. In this welter and confusion the issues which are really most vital to those who are doing the talking may remain unseen. That which is everybody's business is nobody's business. And worse still, in that loss of self-expression for which we try to make amends by talking about the interests of the other fellow or of the country, a host of questionable characters may enter behind the scenes. The interests

really served may be those of small minorities and of a few greedy or ambitious men.

This retreat from reality in current politics is largely an unconscious phenomenon. Neither the citizens nor the officials seem to realize that we have a popular government in name only. The 'will of the People' is still invoked in every campaign by flattering appeals which elevate many citizens with a false sense of their own sovereignty and power. The assumption that there exists a universal, responsible citizenship is like the belief in an orthodox, but outworn, religious creed. It buoys us up with a false hope long after it has ceased to be of any relevance to the practical needs of the day.

### III

If the government is not an impersonal institution directing the individual according to the will of the nation, the question arises as to what it really is. It is obvious that life cannot increase much in complexity beyond that of a primitive, agrarian civilization without our having to relinquish the voice of citizens in popular assembly for the less direct method of delegated authority. In exchange for their right of immediate participation the ordinary citizens receive such formal prerogatives as canvassing for elections, nominating and electing officials, voting in referenda, and the like. Such more or less stereotyped and vicarious activities take the place of the immediate wishes of individuals regarding their governance. Citizens contribute the formal aspect only; the officials in office must provide the content for the acts to which these forms convey sanction. We can vote for a candidate for president; but when he is elected it is his thinking, not ours, which determines the policy of administration. We citizens may decide whether or not a bond issue shall be made for building a bridge; but the exact cost of the structure as well as its engineering construction and architectural design must be determined by experts to whom such matters are delegated. Such formalized acts, or sanctions, are, of course, not a complete or an accurate self-expression of the individuals governed. They comprise, instead, a limited portion of their interests, a segment of behavior common to a group large enough so that its members are politically ef-

fective. In speaking of a government of and by 'the People,' we abstract this formal, political segment of the citizens' behavior from their lives as whole individuals and set it up in imagination, mistaking it for the people themselves. The powerful rôle of the few individuals who are the directing officials is often underestimated or completely overlooked. If the government really were the totality of all the individual citizens, we might speak of it as a free moral agent. Since it is based, however, upon the partial rather than total inclusion of individuals, it is really a full expression of the will of no individual except, perhaps, those in power. Our illusion of a transcendent government of and by the People has disguised the fact that the modern state consists, figuratively, of a network of the peoples' political and economic habits. And it is to the interests of those who work through this network, whether they be in politics or in business, to maintain the fiction that the straw man of popular government is really alive.

#### IV

The consequences of such an ideology are as deplorable as they are far reaching. Let us begin with the most common evil, the lack of interest in politics. The training of many American citizens has led to their picturing government as something aloof from themselves. As Mr. Laski says, they regard themselves as spectators, rather than as actors. There is, first of all, the fact that an ordinary citizen's share in government is limited to such formal and almost infinitesimal functions as voting. Hence there has arisen the conviction that the government is an agency above his head which will go on running the country whether he votes or not. He regards it as an institution to which his petty contribution of ballot-scratching is a ceremonial embellishment rather than an indispensable sanction. It is not stupidity, ignorance, apathy, or moral obtuseness which keeps people away from the polls, so much as the fact that our governmental structure, both in theory and in practice, is such as to make a sustained political interest on his part almost impossible. It is this fact, rather than tradition, boss control, or the greater lure of business opportunities, which explains why our young men 'do not care.' And since this defect



lies not in popular apathy, but in the nature of our institutions themselves, no appeals urging our youths to take an interest in these institutions will cure it.

The same observation applies to the prevailing disregard for law. Reformers force an amendment upon citizens by the fiction that, because it becomes part of our revered Constitution, it therefore embodies automatically the will of the American People. The Eighteenth Amendment was not directly willed into being by a majority of individuals, but enacted largely by legislators who were said to 'represent' the individuals. These representatives decided what was good for the country; and their decision was accepted as a fundamental part of the voice of the country itself. But legislators act together as a body with their own traditions, customs, and official rapport. They are swayed by lobbyists and newspaper men who, when they find common sentiments against them, try either to circumvent these sentiments or to change them to their liking. Legislators are also for the most part lacking in any accurate means of knowing how the bulk of their individual constituents really feel. They are, moreover, subject to suggestion, to moralizing propaganda, and to 'mob influence' within the assembly itself. That men deliberating under such conditions can really express the wills of the individual citizens of the country is indeed a cherished fallacy. Even if the matter were left to individuals directly, the problem of getting a decision which truly represented their own wishes would be difficult enough. With propaganda pouring in upon them from every side, appeals which do not ask them what they want, but tell them what is best for them to have, there would be little opportunity or incentive for that private reflection which is necessary as a basis for self-government. The citizens, therefore, have given up the problem as hopeless. Let the experts, they say, together with our chosen representatives, decide. What wonder that when a decision is finally made by the experts it leaves the citizens cold? No matter how great our confidence in the ability of the planners, no plan devised for us by others can ever exert that claim upon our loyalties which would accompany a policy based upon our own experience and preference. Because citizens do not feel themselves to be a part of their gov-

ernment, it is almost impossible for them to feel a personal responsibility for the laws of that government.

The unreality of our country's laws to many citizens is further shown in their readiness to evade legal responsibility in the pursuit of private gain. This contempt for morality in public acts, often shown by individuals who are honest in personal relations, is the direct outcome of the straw-man fiction. As long as a man plays fairly with his own associates, why, he asks, should he be concerned about that mysterious entity, the body politic? The public conscience is a vague metaphor; why should he worry about any conscience but his own? Government is not truly himself, but only his occasional, formal act of balloting, performed so that the machine over which he has no real control can keep on running. Why then, he queries, should he disturb himself about the morals of that machine? To expect a man, under such conditions, to be public spirited and to display a morale for upholding the virtue of his government may be orthodox political theory and good morals; but it is bad psychology. In questions of right and wrong it is our immediate relation to individuals which counts; most persons are probably not deeply interested, except for private benefits, in upholding institutions.

When a man brings influence to bear to procure the passage of a law or to obtain a governmental contract, he probably does not think of his act as dishonesty or theft. The reason for this is that there is really no one against whom he seems to be committing such an act. He is certainly not cheating the officials, because his connivance often works to their advantage as well as to his. Furthermore, in manipulating the 'government' he is not cheating his neighbor, because his neighbor is not the government. The only connection which his fellow citizen seems to have with the government is an occasional act of voting or the paying of a portion of the public tax so small that he could scarcely be concerned about the act in question. Since government is made up, as it were, only of *parts* of citizens, there is no complete and actual human being against whom a grafter feels that he is offending. His act therefore does not seem to be a crime, or even a case of anti-social conduct, but simply a strategic use of governmental machinery. He is not responsible, he

argues, for that looseness of governmental structure which permits 'honest' grafting as a business concession which every alert enterpriser is expected to employ. Hence he is not stealing, conspiring, or bribing, but simply "fixing things." Given the straw man illusion and the partially inclusive character of our government, it is gratuitous to expect a citizen to place his relations to 'the public' in the same compartment with his private honesty.

Far from being granted with the sense of guilt, these unfair privileges and immunities are frequently accompanied by a glow of altruistic feeling, at least upon the part of those who grant them. Since the government, the courts, and the public funds are not demonstrable as persons, but only as convenient super-personal fictions, it is impossible to feel toward them any of that personal attachment or obligation which we feel toward our friends and toward those who have done us acts of kindness. For a single questionable favor we may secure the lasting affection of our fellow man; for a life of honest labor in the services of 'the government' we may receive scarcely a word of recognition or of thanks. The harm, for example, which we feel we might do to the individuals of the country by securing an immunity for a few to violate the laws dealing with the sale of intoxicating liquors seems to be very impersonal, indirect, and small. Allegiance to the Eighteenth Amendment, after all, appears to be more a matter of enforcing laws than of doing anybody any good; and an interest of this doubtful sort parcelled out among the entire public is not regarded as much of an interest. That which we do for everybody we, in a sense, do for nobody. To sacrifice this unreal and attenuated interest in order to perform a vital service for a friend seems to be not only a more practical but a more humane course.

We ought to look at this situation squarely, for it portends the functional breakdown of our entire political system. If the motives leading to the exploitation of government were only those of the baser sort, if it were only criminals who disregarded laws, the problem would then be simple. But here we have aligned upon the side of corruption some of the most refined and socialized of human sentiments. Sympathy, gratitude, affection, and loyalty

are all traits which may receive expression as truly in the breach of law as in its observance. It is true that these motives are not always, or even usually, unmixed. Keeping one's friend out of jail often brings its own very tangible reward. Nevertheless it is out of such exchanges, no less than in coöperation for legitimate ends, that fellow feeling, loyalty, and comradeship are engendered. There are many individuals, possessed of fine traits, who cannot bring themselves to display their virtues toward an abstract law or a government while neglecting or betraying their fellow men. True it is that concern for individuals' welfare may conceal or condone a lust for private gain; and only with the greatest difficulty can the line of preference be drawn between the dire need of a single friend and the inconvenience or the minor disadvantage of the many. But the moral dilemma of the conflict between public and private loyalties still persists. To maintain the integrity of our institutions we must thwart many of the natural and friendly impulses of individuals.

Nothing short of a reconstruction of our political habits and an abandonment of our ideology of the straw man government will get us out of this predicament. Pious and wrathful denunciations will not help. I know college professors teaching in the field of political science, where, if anywhere, one might expect to find the virtues of good citizenship exemplified, who nevertheless do not scruple to have their own traffic violations "fixed up" at the local police court. There is little use in trying to inspire people by eloquence to good citizenship when there are so many opportunities to help one another and to be a good fellow by being a bad citizen. There is little point in getting our youths excited about the righteousness of the *State* or *Nation* when human values, conscience, and religion are things which are felt as effective only in immediate relationships among individuals. How can we persuade our young men and women to take care of the morals of their government when we teach them that government is something which takes care of *them*? Institutional symbols cannot replace individual motives; nor can they, in themselves, become driving forces toward civic righteousness.

The great alignments of political and economic habits which make up modern institutional behavior are not only means for

securing order and satisfying needs; they are also forms of reaction through which vast numbers of people can be controlled and profits directed into the pockets of the few who are in strategic places. So long as government is conceived as operating in a manner detached from citizens, so long as its functions are delegated to a group of experts, there will remain the likelihood of private exploitation. Integrity becomes a luxury too great to be afforded by those who today are staking their careers upon competitive business enterprise.<sup>2</sup> Government may be looked up to in theory as a wise and benevolent agency; but in practice it tends to become a method of getting what particular individuals want. Nor can there be much hope of changing this situation so long as the old straw man theory remains, and so long as the government is made up not of individual citizens in their full character, but only of their formal, institutional habits by which they become the tools of those who would exploit them.

## V

Let us turn from ordinary graft to that modern type of malefaction known as racketeering. In the older days, when a person's wealth consisted largely of what he had in his house or could carry about, robbery was a more intimate and personal affair. A robber simply met his victim in a dark alley, struck him down, and took away his possessions. There was in these encounters an inclusion, as it were, of the total individual. Hold-ups are, of course, by no means out of date; but because such events are spectacular and deal with acts in which the entire physical reality of the individual is involved, there is a possibility of bringing them fairly well under control. But when, as nowadays, robbery can be committed, not as a person-to-person affair, but through a network of institutional habits, the possibilities for its exploitation are indefinitely multiplied, and the opportunity to check it correspondingly small. The up-to-date brigand does not attack Merchant Smith in person, snatch away his money, and then disappear from the scene. Instead, he gears himself in, functionally, with the economic and political institutions through

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chase, Stuart, "The Luxury of Integrity," *Harpers*, August, 1930, pp. 336-344.

which Merchant Smith operates and, by means of physical terrorism, remains indefinitely in the seat of control. He levies a tribute upon the economic activities of Merchant Smith, a tribute which ultimately must be paid by the merchant's customers, that is, by the people at large. The racketeers have followed the example of the political grafters. They have merely substituted the controls within their own power, such as the black-jack and the revolver, for the citizens' habits of submission to authority by which their political prototype functions. In both cases the tribute gathering becomes a functional part of the behavior which makes up our economic institutions. The trouble lies in the fact that we have organized life on the basis of coöperating segments of behavior common to everybody, yet fully representing nobody. In preying upon human activities it is, therefore, unnecessary to deal with individuals as such. One needs only to work through the agencies or centers from which the institutional habits of a large number of people are usually controlled. As one authority puts it, the reason the racket is so hard to stop is that it looks like normal life.

We have, in fact, embarked upon a new era with regard to possibilities for crime. The older type of robbery as between two persons was bad enough, but it was comparatively simple. By getting control of governmental and business habits men are now able to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellows to a degree which would have humbled the imagination of Jesse James. And while these channels of extortion are ramifying in continually new directions, the possibility of checking the process is becoming, through its intangible nature, ever more remote. Responsibility, for one thing, becomes more difficult to place. Is it such men as Al Capone and his gunmen alone who are responsible for the substitution of gang control for police protection? Are not business men, newspaper editors, and many others who are respected in the community also in part responsible, since they are necessary elements in the system and receive, through protection and privilege, a share of the income from it? Yet surely these latter cannot be classed with such enemies as the cut-throat, the gunman, and the pickpocket. Thousands of just and law-abiding persons are involved indirectly in acts which, were they

done by a single individual to another individual, would be regarded as the most flagrant crimes. We have thus invented not only a new class of crime, but a new class of criminals, for dealing with whom we have no precedent and no established or effective method.

Institutionalized crime is a phenomenon which naturally accompanies the straw man fiction of government. The same specialization of economic and civic function which has made the citizen a mere spectator in the affairs of government has rendered him either the agent or the victim of a spoliation which that 'government,' because of its detachment from individual citizens, is singularly unable to prevent. In contrast with our direct methods of detection and punishment of robbers and burglars, we must have recourse, in dealing with characters like Capone, to such pathetic devices as imprisonment for failure to make an income-tax return. Because of the institutional and indirect nature of his acts, we cannot place responsibility upon the gang-leader, as we ought, for being an extortionist, a robber, and a murderer. We can only manage to shut him away from his fellows for a time on the ground that he has neglected some purely routine duty, some formality attaching to the status of the citizen. Having committed his crime through the behavior which makes up an institution he can be punished only as violating the routine of other institutions. What if gangsters *do* file their income-tax returns and pay their taxes? It is not at all certain that the acts of extortion and violence of which they are guilty can be adequately proved and punished by the help of such evidence. We should then be placed in the shocking position of condoning such crimes, provided only that the criminal faithfully report them, and provided (most sinister of all) that he divide the spoils, through taxation, with the constituted authorities. "Federal officials," I quote from a newspaper item, "pointed out that the government is deprived annually of huge sums in taxes because gamblers, racketeers and grafting politicians fail to state the full amount of their incomes or fail to make any return." According to such statements, which seem to be inspired by authorities, the crime of a racketeer lies not in his extortion, blackmail, and thuggery, but in his refusal to let the general public 'muscle in.' In the light

of such admissions and more especially in the attitude which they betray, what assurance can be held out for the future of popular government in the United States?

## VI

Our inability to deal with this breakdown of political integrity is due not merely to civic aloofness, to the fiction, that is, of a government as separate from the citizens. It is due to the nature of our government itself. As long as the purposes which receive fulfillment through the established political forms are lacking, as in the customary indifference of voters, or are supplied by 'pressure-groups' or by persons with vested interests, we cannot hope for enlightened action in public questions. And in the present partially inclusive, segmentalized structure of our government there appears to be no other source from which the dynamic impulse can be supplied. Instead of fostering the open and enlightened self-expression of citizens, the delegation of governmental functions to experts conceals what the few individuals who are really in control are doing. Not until we shall have attained insight into the futility of our individual rôles in this great drama can we learn how to renounce its indirection and complexity and bring our public actions into accord with our personal ideals. We need criticism, not acceptance, of our institutional habits. No amount of lip-service to 'the State' or 'the Party' depicted in idealistic colors, no eloquence about respect for Law and the sanctity of public office will suffice. Teachers of civics and politics may as well leave off their moralizing about the Constitution, and their pouring out of stereotypes on governmental power and structures. What we need is not old formulas about the duties of the citizen in our political institutions, but a fundamental reconsideration of our institutional habits and fictions themselves.

Office-holders, jurists, and politicians may object to this analysis and plea for political reconstruction as impracticable and visionary. We have to deal, they will maintain, with life as it is. Our present vast, technological civilization, directed according to business interests and regulated through politics, is a reality



to which, whether we like it or not, we must adapt our lives. Not only practical statesmen, but experts and students of political science, have accepted this verdict and have contented themselves with trying to salvage and to redefine whatever rôle can still be found for the private citizen. For there is no use, they argue, in trying to escape the fact that this is an age of intense specialization. Government must of necessity be run by those who have given it lifelong study. We must have experts who understand the intricacies of our economic system. We need more, not fewer, skilled accountants, budget makers, drafters of legislation, industrial engineers, and city managers. We must add more departments to the executive family and spend greater sums for research and planning. Inevitably then the rôle of the common man, the average citizen, must shrink to smaller and smaller proportions. Jefferson's ideal of government as the self-expression of individuals is as out-of-date as the flintlock musket of the Revolution.

Let us take prohibition as an illustration. There is no sense, the social planners have recently argued, in trying to deal with this vast problem by the old-fashioned method of democratic expression. The problem of the control of the liquor traffic, with all the complexities of the administration of justice in the different states and with our nation-wide systems of transportation and commerce, simply cannot be settled by popular suffrage within the several states of the Union. Even granting a national law, the method and the policy of enforcement can by no means be left to a popular vote. Counting noses, the planners said, will never bring us to a satisfactory solution, and will only further complicate this already baffling issue. The only thing to be done was to put the whole problem in the hands of a body of competent specialists and let them determine a plan which could be successfully followed by the nation. Our President accordingly turned for advice to a commission of experts. While these experts themselves did not fully agree, it is noteworthy that, with one exception, there was no disposition among them to return the problem to the citizens of the country. Not only were the wishes of the individuals of the country not canvassed in any genuine sense in the passage of the existing law, but now that

such legislation had come to be regarded by many as stupid and iniquitous, there was still little indication on the part of officials to believe that ordinary citizens were qualified to know what was best for them. Instead of citizens governing themselves we thus have a band of experts conferring about a plan for the citizens. The philosophy of democratic government as an expression of the will of those governed seems to have gone by the board.

The only way out of this muddle, in my opinion, is to stop talking about the feasibility of a certain scheme for running the country and find out what we who are citizens, or what a substantial majority of us, want. What justification have we for abandoning the conviction that individuals are competent judges of their own needs? Instead of determining the will, or the wills, of citizens, our leaders now set up commissions to guess what the people will do and how they will react to certain laws. They try to discover a plan of action which will best harmonize not with individuals' wishes, but with their existing social, political, and economic institutions. Though we are no longer subjects of an absolute monarch, we are regulated, as it were, by a societal blue-print in the hands of experts. This may be a more benign form of despotism than absolute monarchy; but through it, as truly as in the older, monarchical form, we lose our power of individual self-expression. And with this loss our boasted government of and by the people becomes a myth.

"Ah, but you have forgotten the intricacy of our modern society!" some social engineer exclaims. People simply cannot know what they want so long as they are unable to foresee or to understand the consequences of their acts. In the complicated workings of present-day society only specialists have any inkling of what these consequences will be; and prediction even by these is none too certain. Under such conditions is not the delegation of the power of regulating our public affairs both necessary and desirable?

The answer to this is simple. The transfer of governance from individual citizens to experts in order to adjust to the complexity of modern life is as necessary or desirable only as that complexity itself. Now such complexity, which seems to be increasing daily, has been taken for granted as an inevitable step in cultural

progress. Many have deplored it; but practically no one has had the temerity to question or to try to change it. Yet, considerations of immediate expediency aside, is there anything illogical in our making our challenge at just this point?

## VII

One reason why the decline of citizenship and the rise of the straw man fiction has seemed inevitable is because of a certain theory of social change which is now prevalent. I refer to the doctrine of social or cultural determinism. Looking about him, an individual sees that great changes are taking place in our material and immaterial culture, changes which are bound to affect him profoundly. Since it does not appear to him that he is an agent in producing these changes, he feels, naturally enough, that he is powerless to stop them. It is natural also for him to assume that other individuals like himself, are also powerless. Thereupon arises the illusion that the control of social change, because it cannot be attained by any one individual, is beyond the reach of all. The intangibility of our institutional behavior, through which we produce our cultural changes, creates the impression of a great force, a cultural evolution, which sweeps all before it regardless of what individuals may say or do.

By this obscurantism we rationalize our over-balanced technological development and attempt to justify our own political and economic futility. There is no basis for assuming that the trends of society, measured over the last few decades or generations, are causal forces. There are laws of physics which seem to require me, if I wish to build a one-hundred story building, to use certain materials and certain engineering formulas; but there is no natural law known to man which compels me to build such a building. If we look not at single individuals, but at a large number working together, and if we discover that they have built increasingly taller buildings over a period of fifty years, there is still no justification for the assumption that they *had* to build them. The argument that they were compelled to do so in order to keep pace with other features of their developing culture is not sound; for there is no reason, so far as known,

why these other elements had to be constructed. If any determining laws of cultural evolution were known to men, it would be possible through their use to predict the nature of our future inventions and our future style of living. The fact that we cannot do so presents a dilemma generally recognized among social scientists. Could Plato, in the simplicity of Athens, have predicted a locomotive, a radio instrument, or an aeroplane? Can we, in spite of the technological evidences multiplying daily about us, predict the civilization of five hundred, or even of fifty years from now?

The reasons why men have built continually higher buildings, faster conveyances, more rapid means of communication, less laborious machinery, and more complex institutional habits are numerous. But these reasons do not necessarily lie in culture as a determining force. For one thing, we have developed our present technological habits in a more or less unconscious manner. Through organization and invention, business pursuits have become exceedingly profitable for many entrepreneurs; and these men are pressing the activities of invention, organization, and commerce as rapidly as they possibly can. Others, less commercially gifted, or perhaps only less fortunate, have followed and have gained their livelihood by doing their bit, more or less unwittingly, toward the realization of the entrepreneurs' and the technologists' plans. Most of the people whose lives make up our modern civilization have probably never reflected upon that civilization and do not will it at all. They have simply accepted it. So far as human knowledge goes, neither societal evolution nor the Will of the People produced the Empire State Building; it came into being through certain financiers and contractors utilizing workmen in the standardized jobs which make up our building trades. If all or most of us wanted to get together and prevent such enterprises, if we wished to employ the present riveters of skyscrapers for other purposes, the notion of a law of cultural determinism which makes for continually taller buildings would be suddenly and completely discredited. There was likewise no cosmic necessity, so far as we know, which called our habits of the limited liability corporation into being. We let this eco-

conomic habit-pattern be developed, more or less unconsciously, by the connivance, through judges and legislators, of those who wished to conduct business upon an ever-increasing scale. We could abolish the habits of the corporation if we wanted to; and with them one of the sturdiest props of the technological exploiters would fall. Cultural determinism, in my opinion, is superstition. The only reason why our culture seems to control us is because we have not yet awakened to the desirability of controlling our cultural habits.

But granting that deterministic logic is shaky, the reader may object that he sees no possibility, present or future, of raising the masses to an appreciation of their powers and to an effective participation in their own destiny. How can we ever lead them out of the present turmoil into a new simplicity and tranquillity of living, into an era in which the government of all, like the intelligent conduct of one person, will be achieved through individual self-expression? Education, that invariable social panacea, will be at once invoked. But here let us guard ourselves from the pitfall against which we have warned others. If we are thinking of the specialized education of our present schools and colleges we shall cherish a false hope. The notion of educational institutions as agencies for the creation of leaders to save the country is as futile as our ideology of a 'popular' government which is run by experts. The remedy for bad political institutions must be sought, first of all, not in other and better institutions, but in individuals. It is not education as an agency which is needed, but education as a working philosophy of life. Our gaze should be not upon some new era to which we are to lead the masses, but upon an opportunity for that enlightenment which people can truly achieve only by themselves. Reflection is a better name for the process than is education,—the reflection of individuals everywhere upon the value of integrity in public and private life as over against the good of accelerated commerce and industry. Such an end is to be secured not so much through social leadership as through the self-enlightenment of citizens by their own observation and thinking. They must acquire an insight into their uncritical acceptance of their own culture.

---

They must realize what they are doing to themselves through their institutional habits and their fictions about popular government. For government as self-expression cannot be achieved through bureaus, commissions, parties, experts, or even through schools and universities; it must be worked out within individuals themselves.

---

---

## V

### THE PROBLEM OF THE PUBLIC

---

---

There is something deep within human nature itself which pulls toward settled relationships. Inertia and the tendency toward stability belong to emotions and desires as well as to masses and molecules. That happiness which is full of content and peace is found only in enduring ties with others, which reach to such depths that they go below the surface of conscious experience to form its undisturbed foundation. No one knows how much of the frothy excitement of life, of mania for motion, of fretful discontent, of need for artificial stimulation, is the expression of frantic search for something to fill the void caused by the loosening of the bonds which hold persons together in immediate community of experience. If there is anything in human psychology to be counted upon, it may be urged that when man is satiated with restless seeking for the remote which yields no enduring satisfaction, the human spirit will return to seek calm and order within itself. This, we repeat, can be found only in the vital, steady, and deep relationships which are present only in an immediate community.<sup>1</sup>

WITH HIS usual insight, Professor Dewey has cut through many venerable fictions, and has given us a critique of social organization which is deeply significant. The starting point of his argument lies in the search for the public. In defining this term Professor Dewey rejects both the mystical notion of an absolute will, or a Sovereign People, and the mere enumeration of the separate individuals in society. His view is stated in terms of instrumentalities, that is, of acts and their consequences. The following example will illustrate his method. If A and B carry on some transaction between them, the results may pass only from one to the other, conveying no advantage or no injury beyond A and B themselves. The activity in this case is private.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, John, *The Public and Its Problems*, Henry Holt and Company, 1927, pp. 213-14.

If it be found, on the other hand, that the consequences of the transaction extend *beyond* those directly concerned, and affect the welfare of many others, the act acquires a public character.<sup>2</sup> In the words of the author: "Those indirectly and seriously affected for good or for evil form a group distinctive enough to require recognition and a name. The name selected is The Public. This public is organized and made effective by means of representatives who as guardians of custom, as legislators, as executives, judges, etc., care for its especial interests by methods intended to regulate the conjoint actions of individuals and groups. Then and in so far, association adds to itself political organization, and something which may be government comes into being: the public is a political state."<sup>3</sup> Again, the author says, ". . . the state is the organization of the public effected through officials for the protection of the interests shared by its members."<sup>4</sup>

Several corollaries follow from this definition. In the first place, since the public is no specific group of individuals, but is defined wholly by the range of the common interest in a particular transaction, there may be a separate public for every issue raised. We are compelled, therefore, to think of *various* publics, some overlapping and some distinct, which are established from time to time through various transactions of individuals. The task before us is to weld together all these variously affected groups into a wider public, the Great Community, organized upon the basis of the interests which all possess in common. It is in Professor Dewey's concept of the state that such a notion is developed. For according to him: "A public articulated and operating through representative officers is the state; there is no state without a government, but also there is none without the public."<sup>5</sup> There are dangers which result from intrusting such a responsibility to individual leaders; but there are also benefits to be derived from the organization of a good state, that is, from a situation in which the public is truly formed and then becomes articulated through officers who subordinate their private interests to the public good. There is a lag, says Professor Dewey, between the modern technological organization of society and

---

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 13.    <sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 35.    <sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 33.    <sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 67.



the development of a political organization adequate for the expression of the interests of the public, or publics, concerned. This is the plight of modern democracy. "The same forces," he writes, "which have brought about the forms of democratic government, general suffrage, executives and legislators chosen by majority vote, have also brought about conditions which halt the social and humane ideals that demand the utilization of government as the genuine instrumentality of an inclusive and fraternally associated public. 'The new age of human relationships' has no political agencies worthy of it. The democratic public is still largely inchoate and unorganized."<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, a vivid picture of this "eclipse of the public" is presented. The possibility of obtaining the genuine and free expression of a public is thwarted by vast industrial and economic systems which are far beyond the control or even the understanding of the average man. The helplessness of the farmer, whose welfare is dependent upon capricious economic conditions, upon inflation, depression, tariff regulations, and uncontrolled discrepancies between consumption and production, is an instance of the total eclipse of the individual so far as his self-expression within an articulate public is concerned. Our so-called 'popular' elections seem to express the will only of certain groups of business or party leaders. The successful conduct of government in our modern age requires experts possessing technical knowledge with which the average citizen is wholly unfamiliar. At the same time, the lack of the effective organization of publics, together with the vast range of consequences of acts performed in our closely knit social and economic structure, is likely to draw all civilized nations of the world into devastating conflict. "The need," says Professor Dewey, "is that the non-political forces organize themselves to transform existing political structures: that the divided and troubled publics integrate."<sup>7</sup> In this state of eclipse the public will remain, says this author, until "the Great Society is converted into a Great Community." Communication alone can create such a great community. We have now the physical tools of this communication as never before; but the thoughts and

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

aspirations which should integrate the warring factions are not communicated. "Our Babel is not one of tongues but of the signs and symbols without which shared experience is impossible."<sup>8</sup> Professor Dewey identifies the formation of the Great Community with the full expression of the integrated personalities of individuals. As long as the various groups within a society are incompatible, an individual cannot belong to all of them without an inner conflict and tension. And in so far as individuals belong to certain groups and not others there will be an outer conflict between the members of the different groups. This problem of integrating the publics can therefore be solved only through producing a harmony or a *community of interest* between divergent groups.

These observations are followed by a plea for the development of a broader interest in science and its use in bringing about the Great Community. There must also be full dissemination of knowledge and free discussion concerning public matters, as well as a more intimate participation of the common people in problems which today are reserved for the expert alone. We should break down the stereotyped emotional habits centering around our institutions. The insight of individuals into public affairs should be increased by the removal of censorship. The Great Community, according to our author, is to be achieved largely through the development of the signs and symbols of communication, so that "genuinely shared interest in the consequences of interdependent activities may inform desire and effort and thereby direct action."<sup>9</sup> ". . . Democracy is a name for a life of free and enriching communion. . . . It will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication."<sup>10</sup>

One of the first errors to be dispelled in the task of welding the diverse publics into the Great Community is the setting of the individual over against the group, or, in other words, opposing a philosophy of individualism by a philosophy of collectivism. In an exceptionally keen analysis our philosopher shows that different groups are often merely collections of individuals taken

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 155.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 184.

in one phase of their combined activity as distinguished from some other phase. The term society itself is often used merely to refer to the grouping of certain activities of individuals, regarded as separate from other activities; it is not an entity separate from individuals. So long as we place the interests which we call individual in opposition to the interests we call social, we are met by an insuperable difficulty in reconciling them. When, however, the problem is viewed as one of the redistributing of individuals in various interest groupings, the issues germane to a practical solution emerge.

Another step which, in Professor Dewey's opinion, is necessary for our method is the abandonment of *a priori* theories of social evolution, and of the belief in an absolute character of society and of the individual. Laws relating to natural phenomena are likewise irrelevant to the problem. Human science must not be absorbed into physical science. For in the social field, human agencies enter the situation to alter it as it is in process; and results follow which conform to no known natural law. What is needed is the freedom and the willingness to experiment with each situation as it arises. A plea is also made for a more democratic sharing of the problem of method; for government entrusted exclusively to the 'wisest,' or to experts, is likely to divorce the problem from the very matrix of human living in which it has arisen and in which its solution must be found. An essential need is the improvement of discussion and debate; and this improvement can best be secured by freeing and perfecting the processes of inquiry, and by disseminating the conclusions gained from investigations. Secrecy, prejudice, bias, and propaganda must be replaced by inquiry and publicity in order that the intelligence of the masses may have a chance to express itself in social policies. Until these conditions are met and the masses are given a fair political opportunity, it should not be asserted that they are lacking in capacity for self government.

"In its deepest and richest sense," writes Professor Dewey, "a community must always remain a matter of face-to-face intercourse. This is why the family and neighborhood, with all their deficiencies, have always been the chief agencies of nurture, the

means by which dispositions are stably formed and ideas acquired which laid hold on the roots of character. The Great Community, in the sense of free and full intercommunication, is conceivable. But it can never possess all the qualities which mark a local community. It will do its final work in ordering the relations and enriching the experience of local associations."<sup>11</sup> Although our author admits that the fullest expression of personality is possible only in the intimate and smaller groups, he believes that the future organization which he calls the 'Great' Community may help to raise the human contacts in these local groups above the trivial and the banal. If we preserve the free flow of communication as our goal, it will be possible to use the vast technological and economic systems of our day for the liberation and the progress of life in local communities.

## II

Such, in hasty resumé, is the thesis of *The Public and Its Problems*. That it touches the heart of many of our most perplexing societal problems most readers will probably agree. Yet profound and challenging as it is, there are, in my opinion, two respects in which this volume promises more than its method can fulfill. The first criticism deals with a problem of scientific method, the second with the psychological analysis of the concepts of the public and the state.

From the standpoint of scientific procedure and prediction, the guidance of social changes through a consideration of 'consequences,' though a seemingly plausible method, has certain difficulties which may prove insuperable. A foretelling of the consequences of an act, or the carrying over of the experience gained in one situation to another, requires that we should discover in social science laws which are sufficiently universal and independent of particular social conditions to enable us successfully to predict. But in the unstable, shifting, and voluntaristic character of societal events these conditions, as admitted by Professor Dewey himself, are almost impossible to fulfill. It is impossible to predict 'consequences' in society as a chemist might predict the result of putting two elements together or a physicist might predict the

---

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 211.

consequences of applying a certain force to a known object. For there are no precise social laws on the basis of which such a prediction might be made; nor are we able to control and stabilize social conditions (as the natural scientists control the physical conditions in their investigations) in such a manner as to make the discovery of such laws possible. On the contrary, in social events, each case seems to be unique. The discovery of generalizations which we can transfer from one social situation to another is so difficult as to be virtually precluded.

When one speaks of 'consequences' one is often thinking, moreover, in terms not merely of laws and predictions, but of cause and effect. This is admitted by Professor Dewey, though with the careful qualification that the causal connection is *within* the series of phenomena observed and not over and above it.<sup>12</sup> And when one speaks in causal terms, one is likely to close the door upon inductive, scientific research rather than to facilitate it. In the experimental procedure of scientists, 'laws' are merely precise formulations of the order in which the scientist finds that events generally occur. There is no ground for projecting a causal 'force' or 'agency' into these formulations, a fact which is acknowledged by Professor Dewey himself.<sup>13</sup> One who speaks in terms of cause and effect, however, frequently uses these generalizations of scientists as though they were forces through which present phenomena have come into being, and by the use of which we can predict events of the future which are bound, through these forces, to occur. Such a practice is unsatisfactory both for explanation and for prediction. Since we can never be certain that the precise causes which we list have been the major conditions, or that certain laws and not others have operated in the past, our explanation is little better than a guess. And our prediction of the future is bound by a dogmatism which substitutes the finality of our comparative ignorance for the exploration of nature, and leaves us powerless in the face of errors and exceptions which, in the course of time, will practically always occur.

Professor Dewey alleges a certain difference between the as-

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 201.

sumptions underlying social study and the laws of the natural scientists. " 'Laws' of social life," he says, "when it is genuinely human, are like laws of engineering. If you want certain results, certain means must be found and employed. The key to the situation is a clear conception of consequences wanted, and of the technique for reaching them, . . ." <sup>14</sup> Let us place beside this assertion his earlier statement that, although he denies special causal forces or agencies outside the phenomena, he does not question the existence of "causal relations or connections among phenomena themselves." "There can be," says Professor Dewey, "no consequences and measures to regulate the mode and quality of their occurrence without the causal nexus." <sup>15</sup> In other words, the notion of 'consequences' implies the notion of causes; but the 'laws' of life or society, upon which the knowledge of causes must rest, cannot be universal generalizations like the laws of the physical sciences. But how can such techniques of social engineering be devised unless general laws can be discovered which will fit varying social situations? Regardless of the peculiarities of the particular terrain, our civil engineer who builds a bridge knows that the 'pull' of gravity and the supporting power of his materials will remain the same. He has formulas, generalized from a broad experience, which will help him to accomplish his purpose in almost any situation. Can the 'social engineer' boast of a similar adaptation of his technique? What formulas has he, derived and tested by universal experience, which will guide him, amid a bewildering variety of social situations, in the application of the proper method to the desired end? Does not the notion of a causal nexus, upon which 'consequences' depend, imply a certain universality of occurrence, comparable, at least, to the universality of the laws of physical science? We have, in fact, Professor Dewey's own word for this; for, after rejecting the unscientific notion of a cause as a force, he says: "But in his actual procedures, the scientific inquirer into physical events treats a law simply as a stable correlation of changes in what happens, a statement of the way in which one phenomenon, or some aspect or phase of it, varies when some other specified phenomenon

---

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

varies. 'Causation' is an affair of . . . the order in which a series of changes takes place. To know cause and effect is to know, in the abstract, the formula of correlation in change, and in the concrete, a certain historical career of sequential events."<sup>16</sup> Does not this passage place causation upon a basis of a repeated and universalized experience? Even in the concrete view there is, according to Professor Dewey, a 'certain' historical career of sequential events, and the word 'certain' must here mean something which is more general than the particular instance; for one cannot pick out any event which precedes another as the cause of the latter, but only a *particular* antecedent event,—and for selecting this event from among all others which preceded we must have as our guide some general principle or 'law' of nature. The notion of causation, if used at all, must therefore be used as denoting a principle which operates in a universal, or at least in a highly general, sense. Without a knowledge of general law in society, we cannot have an interpretation of specific causes; and without causes we cannot have 'consequences'; we cannot work toward a given end with an assured prediction that the methods we employ will achieve certain desired results. The difference which Professor Dewey recognizes between the character of social life and the laws of the physical sciences is, in my opinion, well justified. But when he gives up the latter in the social field he gives up the very notion of law itself. And with law must go the guiding prediction of consequences as well. One cannot abolish the method of natural science and at the same time lay claim to its fruits. It is precisely because the engineer *retains* the notion of law, as generalized from a broad experience in the physical sciences, that he is able to predict, and hence in some measure to control, the materials with which he works. If, in thinking in terms of causation and consequence, the engineer cannot dispense with the highly generalized law of the natural scientist, neither can the social philosopher who attempts to show the possibility of engineering in the social field.

In insisting that thinking and procedure in the social field should be experimental rather than absolutistic Professor Dewey

---

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 201.

has renounced an error to which not only social philosophers but many leaders in power are prone. In his suggestion that societal habits should be held not as sacred, but as tentative and subject to change with the progress of experimentation, he has contributed another note of deep significance. When it comes to the actual work of conducting such experiments, however, it is to be feared that the solutions offered will not be of much avail. In the absence of laws or generalizations affording a prediction of the consequences of proposed adjustments, there can be but little intelligent pre-direction. A failure, moreover, to secure the expected result cannot, in social phenomena as in the natural sciences, lead to the discovery of a more general law heretofore unnoticed. Each exception must be regarded as a 'law' unto itself, and hence scarcely as a law at all. Hence little social knowledge can be acquired in these experimental efforts which will help us to predict the results of applying our techniques in new situations. This criticism by no means implies that experimentation is not the proper method to use. It means only that we must expect research in the social field to be based to a greater extent upon trial and error, or even upon fumbling, than research in the physical sciences. Few, however, would deny that even unguided trial and error, in our urgent social need, is better than no effort at all. It is better far than the *a priori*, absolutistic solutions which Professor Dewey so justly rejects.

### III

In addition to the deficiency of the foresight of consequences as a practicable method, it seems to me that *The Public and Its Problems* is lacking in its analysis of the human, psychological factors entering into the notion of the 'public.' Professor Dewey speaks of groups or publics as representing specific lines of interest through which a number of individuals are united. He also suggests that the true, democratic functioning of the public depends upon the adjustment of the various groups in society in such a way that an individual who belongs to many groups can express in each of them some phase of his personality without conflicting with his interests as a member of the others. The full social expression of an integrated personality is, in other words, a cri-



terion of successful citizenship. Carrying Professor Dewey's idea still further, let us distinguish two fundamentally different types of groups, according to whether the social aggregate in question is based upon a *single segment* of the behavior of individuals or upon the *whole personality* of the individuals concerned. Groups are not merely the expressions of interests; they are also the *habitual and similar modes of behavior* of the individuals involved. John Doe, for example, is a merchant and belongs to a Chamber of Commerce. These facts define not only a certain group or groups, to which John Doe belongs, which we think of as more comprehensive than any individual, but also a set of institutional practices and sentiments which are habitual with John Doe himself. Together with other business men he is said to form a certain 'group.' This group, however, as something over and above the individuals, is an object of pure metaphysical speculation. It really consists, so far as explicit human knowledge goes, of the similar habits of the individuals concerned. For the purpose of speaking in group terms, these common habits are fictitiously abstracted from the rest of the personalities of the group members and are considered by themselves. Similarly, one might speak of John Doe's religious or church-going habits, in which he also functions in group relationships with other individuals. The entire functioning of these religious habits of John Doe and his associates might be spoken of as the 'Episcopal Church.' The notion of 'group,' as used in this sense, denotes the abstraction of certain common habits of thinking, feeling, and acting from the whole personalities of a number of individuals. These 'common segments' of behavior are, of course, recognizable only in connection with separate individuals and are functional aspects of individuals; they are never separated in fact from the other habits and tendencies of the persons concerned. They form a purely conceptual aggregate. Now an abstract aggregate of this sort, a group, an institution, or a public which is composed of segments of the behavior of individuals, rather than of individuals themselves, requires some special term to distinguish it. We shall speak of it as a situation of *partial inclusion*; because not the whole personality, but only a limited segment of it is involved in the individuals concerned.

In contrast with the notion of group as a situation of partial inclusion, or a grouping, there should be mentioned another type of aggregate. This type embraces not a segment, but the *whole*, of each individual involved. Such a group we may speak of as a situation of *total inclusion*. It implies the inclusion of an endless variety of desires, emotions, habits, and thoughts integrated within each human organism, as well as these physical organisms themselves. It denotes, in other words, an aggregate of unique individuals far too complex to be characterized adequately through any abstracted uniformity of action or desire. The interests involved really comprise the sum total of the interests of human life in the individuals concerned. As an example of such a group we may cite the small, face to face community of pioneer days, in which the individuals were independent of any distant economic or political organization, and were mutually sustaining. Through immediate, personal contacts their needs as whole personalities were satisfied and all phases of their characters expressed.

Such a totally inclusive group is, of course, too complex to be fully represented by any alignment of its members on the basis of some one particular interest. When so aligned, the situation ceases to be one of total inclusion and becomes one of partial, or incomplete, representation of the interests of the individuals concerned. The particular segment on the basis of which the grouping takes place, whether it be the striving for political or economic advantages, or for some desired religion or other institutional symbols, is invariably too narrow to represent the whole of life. In so far as this alignment, or partial inclusion, is developed into a position of first importance in society, the totally inclusive group, that is, the community, must disappear; and with it must go that spontaneous inter-communication and the full expression of individual personalities for which Professor Dewey pleads. Politics, trade, or ecclesiasticism will become the controlling interest of life. The totally inclusive group is therefore not a 'struggle group,' or a grouping which can be readily organized as a public for 'getting something done.' Yet it is more realistic than the latter, since it does not involve the false abstraction of one interest or segment of behavior from the re-

mainder of the human personality.

It is important to keep these two group concepts carefully distinguished; otherwise a confusion will result which is fatal both to social theory and to research. If, for example, we speak of the "welfare of the American nation" (meaning the United States), the group which we here designate by the term 'nation' is one of total inclusion; for we mean by 'welfare' the wholesome existence of human beings as complete biological organisms and as human personalities. A nation could not have welfare unless there was a reasonable satisfaction of all the major needs and interests of its individual members. The nation in this sense is the flesh and blood, the complete habit-systems and personalities, of all its individuals. If, on the other hand, we say that "the American Nation has adopted prohibition," we are speaking in terms only of partial inclusion. In the first place, by no means every individual of the nation favors prohibition; and many refuse even to practice it as a legal restraint upon their conduct. And even those who practice prohibition frequently cannot be said to be directly 'adopting' the system. By a single, segmentalized habit of self-restraint in buying and selling, they help to put and to keep upon the statute books, or in the constitution, this particular stipulation against the sale of alcoholic beverages. They do not themselves actively 'adopt' the system; they only passively regulate their behavior in relation to the behavior of their fellows in such a manner that the system obtains in our society. It is then said, through a kind of group fiction, that the 'Nation' has adopted prohibition. This active or passive conforming of certain individuals thus becomes accepted as a 'law of the Country,' and thereupon, many people, including some who are strongly opposed to it with a part of their natures, conform to it merely because there are invoked in its support those symbols of law and of governmental authority toward which these people have formed habits of obedience regardless of the content of the laws concerned. The statement that "the American Nation has adopted prohibition" is one which is frequently made by partisans of this cause for the purpose (perhaps unconscious) of controlling citizens through the fiction that the 'Nation,' in a genuine and totally inclusive sense, has espoused this policy.

If there is to be that clarity of thinking and freedom of action necessary for an intelligent participation in public affairs, it is necessary for citizens to disabuse themselves of all such fictions which tend to obscure the distinction between total and partial inclusion in the concept of the group.

Returning now to the public, it will be clear that this concept, as Professor Dewey defines it, is, apart from occasional shifts in meaning, one of partial rather than of total inclusion. Wherever the results of private transactions go beyond the individuals immediately involved and affect others, we have in the group of those affected, a public. But such a public is obviously defined only in terms of that particular segment of the individuals' interests which is affected by the transaction. Only in very unusual cases, as, for example, when an entire population is carried away into slavery, would all of the habits, desires, and attitudes of every individual be affected. And in the instance just cited the transaction (deportation) is so involuntary and passive that it can scarcely be said that any public action is involved. Since the existence of Professor Dewey's 'public' thus depends upon a single or limited group of interests, rather than upon individuals as complete organisms, it is illogical to speak of this public, regarded as this interest in itself, as thinking or acting. It is the integrated individual as a whole who acts, and not a single segment. It should be remembered also that *competing* segments are sometimes involved within a given aggregate of individuals whom Professor Dewey would call a public. One common segment of their traditional or their economic interest, for example, might lead the people of a certain locality to vote a straight Democratic ticket. Another common interest, let us say, in prohibition, might impel them to elect certain Republican officials, since these office-seekers might be 'dry' in their convictions, whereas the Democratic candidates might be 'wet.' In this case we should have two publics consisting of precisely the same individuals. The conflict between these two 'publics,' affected oppositely by the transactions concerned, would really be a conflict within individuals, the same individual being affected both favorably and adversely by the same transaction. This extreme example suggests that logically Professor Dewey's public is not a group of individuals at all, but of partial, ab-

stracted segments of their interest or behavior.

We see now that the consequences which our author has so vividly depicted as the 'eclipse of the public' are really inevitable. So long as we employ the segmental habits or interests of individuals, instead of the complete individuals who possess them, to differentiate a 'group' or a 'public,' there is little possibility of integrating these publics into one great community. These segmental interests would need, for a completely integrated expression, to be put back in the individuals from whom they were abstracted. And in this case their *common* aspect would be lost, because the segment in question would have a different significance in each individual according to his *particular* need and viewpoint; that is, according to the remainder of his individual personality. By thus shifting and individualizing our gaze the 'public' would be made to disappear. The only other alternative would be to picture the integration of these individual behavior segments in some hypothetical, super-individual, such as the supposed 'personality of the Group.' We enter here a realm of speculation which Professor Dewey himself would be among the first to repudiate.

The disconcerting conclusion at which we now arrive is that, owing to the logic of their definition, the publics, whose chaotic disorganization the author deplures, really cannot be integrated at all. There is no way of reaching individual self-expression through a Great Community so long as we put our faith in the organization of the publics of the Great Society. The trouble with publics and with institutions is that they are, and must be, groupings based upon partial inclusion. *The evil inherent in our social organization lies in the fact of social organization itself.* Hence the only solution, as I see it, is frankly to give up the ideal of the Great Community and the integrated public and to return, so far as possible, to the face to face relationships of the smaller group and to the total inclusion of local community living.

Professor Dewey himself acknowledges the local community as the truly fundamental solution; but he labors to retain, along with this ideal, the opposite type of groupings based upon partial inclusion. He hopes to bring to the service of local community living something which seems to me to be essentially opposed to

its existence. The futility of trying to achieve a full expression of integrated personalities in the modern chaos of partially inclusive publics is nowhere better expressed than in Professor Dewey's own language. In the following passage I have indicated by the use of brackets the shift back and forth, from total to partial inclusion, as the author endeavors to diagnose the problem through his elusive concept of 'the public.'

But the very size, heterogeneity and mobility of urban populations, the vast capital required, the technical character of the engineering problems involved, soon tire the attention of the average voter. . . . The ramification of the issues before the public [total inclusion] is so wide and intricate, the technical matters involved are so specialized, the details are so many and so shifting, that the public [or more realistically, 'a public: partial inclusion] cannot for any length of time identify and hold itself. It is not that there is no public, no large body of persons having a common interest in the consequences of social transactions [partial inclusion]. There is too much public, a public too diffused and scattered and too intricate in composition [total inclusion]. And there are too many publics, for conjoint actions which have indirect, serious and enduring consequences are multitudinous beyond comparison, and each one of them crosses the others and generates its own group of persons especially affected [partial inclusion] with little to hold these different publics together in an integrated whole.<sup>17</sup>

It seems to me, therefore, that when Professor Dewey comes back, in the latter portion of his book, to those face to face, community relationships which include the whole personalities of the individuals concerned, he is on surer ground. Whether the alignments, or partially inclusive groupings, of vast scope which ramify through the Great Community (which is really not a community at all) can be made to serve the interests of local community life is another question. It is true that much drudgery and enslavement to the rigors of a primitive environment can be removed by the elaborate industrial and economic organization of the great society. The partial inclusion involved in a large scale division and organization of industry makes work less fatiguing

---

<sup>17</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 137. Words in brackets are supplied by the present writer.

than formerly and, in purely quantitative terms, more efficient. It can be so administered as to allow more time for leisure. But there is the continual danger, as Professor Dewey himself has shown, of the infringement of the leaders who control these partial segments of interest upon the remainder of the lives of the individuals concerned. There is likewise the danger that we may come to exaggerate the value and significance of the behavior segments upon which these institutional groupings throughout the great society are based, as we seem to have done in our modern business civilization. And as for the suggestion that we should so adjust the various groupings as to express the entire personality of each individual, this proposal overlooks the existence of habits of feeling, thinking, or acting which are so peculiarly a part of the individual that they cannot be represented by any social grouping at all. The modern psychological conception of personality as a *unique* integration of habits and traits in the individual is denied by a social pattern which is based upon partial, rather than upon total, inclusion. The very existence of the public tends to produce an insoluble problem so far as complete individual self-expression is concerned. This disquieting fact must be squarely faced if we are to find a solution of the dilemmas which Professor Dewey so vividly describes.

The confusion arising from failing to discriminate between partial and total inclusion bears directly upon the problem of communication. While it is true that publics can be brought together only when communication is freely carried on, communication will not, of itself, produce an integration of the publics whose present chaotic separation Professor Dewey deplores. When our author says that democracy is a name for a life of free and enriching communion, he seems to be thinking of the face to face type of communication, in which any behavior segment or response of one individual can be awakened through stimulation by the word or action of another. Such a form of communion would demand immediate proximity; it would require the local rather than the great community. Communication to great numbers at one time through a group spokesman or a political representative, through the newspaper, the radio, or any similar method, will fail to bring

about the result desired. Since so many people have to be addressed, unique interests and differences of personality must be ignored. It is only a detached segment of *common* interest which can be made the subject of the communication, and never the communion of individuals as wholes. It is, moreover, impossible for individuals to answer the communication in any spontaneous and effective way, that is, in a manner which will truly express their personal desire and viewpoint. 'Yea' and 'nay' are practically the only answers which can be given. Communication in situations of partial inclusion merely emphasizes the canalized, institutional aspects of social organization, and leads us directly away from the goal of the integration of publics into the Great Community. If this is true, the 'signs' or 'symbols of communication' must become stereotypes calling forth responses common to all and permitting no individual shades of variation. The symbols employed will not permit the evoking of individual attitudes in opposition to the intent of the one who uses them, or in opposition to the particular segment upon which the individuals to whom the communication is addressed are organized. Hence there may be occasions in which these symbols of communication, far from expressing and enriching the whole of human life, really become the agencies of class bias, mob compulsion, and conflicts. One has only to recall the use of patriotic symbols in militant nationalism, or the ecclesiastical symbols through which superstitions have been traditionally exploited, in order to realize that communication may, under certain conditions, defeat rather than foster the development of the Great Community. More fundamental than communication is the question of *how individuals are grouped or aligned toward one another when they communicate*. For this relationship determines the very content of what is communicated.

Professor Dewey's notion of the public itself assumes that earlier groupings, based upon some common segment of individuals' behavior or interests, are already in existence. In order that an effect may be produced upon a large number of individuals who are remote from the scene of an immediate transaction, there must already exist a pattern of common, or institutionalized, habits through which the effect can be transmitted. If, for example, there



had not been previously developed an elaborate system of economic transportation, exchange, and credit (in other words, if there were not already existing our familiar economic institutions), such transactions as federal reserve loans, tariff agreements, mergers, or a stimulation of activity on the stock exchange, could not produce results so widespread as to affect or to create a 'public.' In fact, publics, in Professor Dewey's sense, have come into being largely out of adverse effects which have come to individuals because of their previous institutional organization. It would be well to recognize these more long-standing, common segments of behavior which are the foundations upon which the more ephemeral publics are built, before we attempt the solution of 'the Public's' problems. It will be seen, for example, that effective economic organization could not have taken place without some degree of concomitant political support. Segmental alignments of power, or obedience to a sovereign, have usually accompanied and given sanction to various other alignments of institutional habit, such as the economic or the religious. 'The state,' therefore, instead of being elaborated as a means of expressing the desires of an articulated public, would probably have been in the picture before the public, as defined by Professor Dewey, could have come into existence. Instead of expressing the integrated interests of whole human beings in a Great Community, the state, as it has traditionally existed, is an alignment of common segments which may be blind and ineffective; for like the alignments constituting the public, it is based upon partial, rather than total, inclusion.

Our analysis of the psychological factors in social organization therefore pushes the dilemma of the public back into a more fundamental conflict; that, namely, of the segmentalized *versus* the integrated behavior of individual human beings. Before we can solve the problems facing us in popular government today we must explore more fundamentally the consequences, not merely of human transactions, but of the system of alignments upon the basis of partial inclusion which make the consequences of transactions, and the publics affected by them, a reality. We shall be better able to cope with the human problems of the 'public' when we are willing to experiment not merely with the distributive readjustment of in-

---

dividuals in new groupings and the finding of interests common to all the publics, but with the more drastic method of challenging the principle of partial inclusion itself. For it is from this principle that the issues creating and defining the 'public' emerge.

---

---

## VI

### JUSTICE TAKES ITS COURSE

---

---

I believe in old-fashioned New Englanders . . . I was impressed by the *prima facie* case they made out . . . yet the thought creeps, like the chill of death creeping up the veins, that these men, even such as these, sought not justice but to obey the Thing . . .

So plain was the evidence . . . so numerous were the good folk convinced of these men's innocence, that it seemed a matter of course that the case would be thrown open for a full and searching review. . . . Then from somewhere rose a Thing that said—"No!" . . . Lawyers took steps, drew up documents, . . . the Thing said, "No!" . . . Statesmen in distant, civilized, friendly lands, cabled the plea for justice. The scholars, the authors, the poets of the world, turned to Massachusetts, pleading. . . . The Thing said, "No!" . . . Men and women gray with good works . . . people of wealth and culture, people of race and ancestry . . . these pleaded. But the Thing, the Thing said, "No!"<sup>1</sup>

*Shaemas O'Sheel.*

ON THE MORNING of August twenty-third, 1927, I was attending a conference of social scientists in a small New England town. It was to me a depressing morning. Yesterday there had still been hope of further delays, of a deeper investigation of the guilt or innocence of the accused; but now it was too late. As one who clings in a common catastrophe to the solace of his fellow mortals, I sought for some group in which the matter was under discussion. Yet more strange and depressing still, no such group was to be found. Everyone seemed to be going his way as usual. Even the professors and the social scientists of the conference, men who I thought should have been deeply concerned, were apparently oblivious to any interruption in their daily routine. Perhaps they were too deeply stirred for utterance, or haunted by strange, unspeakable fears. I never knew. Only two persons did I hear voicing any sentiment upon the execution. A young man and a girl,

---

<sup>1</sup> *The New Republic*, Sept. 7, 1927.

scarcely out of their teens, paused before the headlines at the news-stand. "What a pity!" one of them murmured, and they passed on with sorrow upon their faces. An old lady sitting in the lobby of the hotel with a shawl over her lap expostulated with a patient bell-boy against the electrocution of two men who, if the accounts in her paper were correct, might be entirely innocent. Aside from these incidents there was little to disturb the quiet atmosphere of the place. It was another bright day in August, another day for the play of the vacationists, the trade of the merchants, the deliberations of the social scientists. Yesterday it had seemed incredible that this execution could have been carried out; yet now it had passed into history. No man vested with power had raised his hand to prevent it. In spite of fearless protests here and there, in spite of determined efforts of certain organized groups of defenders, no great body of men and women had risen with a conviction and a power sufficient to overwhelm the voice of the obdurate judges. Sacco and Vanzetti were dead.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> **HISTORICAL NOTE:** The view presented in this essay assumes no conclusion concerning the guilt or innocence of Sacco and Vanzetti, but only that the evidence found against them was inadequate, from the standpoint of logic, to justify their conviction. In order that the reader may refresh his memory upon this question, the following account of the main events, and of the evidence and arguments presented to the trial jury or available to the reviewing authorities, is included. An attempt has been made to state the facts as accurately and impartially as possible.

On the afternoon of April 15th, 1920, a robbery and two murders were committed in South Braintree, Massachusetts. Two employees of a local shoe factory carrying a payroll were shot by two bandits who, immediately after the shooting, were picked up in an automobile together with a third who had seized the money, all of them making their escape. On May 5th of that year, Nicola Sacco, an Italian shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, an Italian fish peddler, were arrested on a street car going from South Braintree to Brockton and were later charged with this crime. They were indicted on September 11th, 1920; and their trial, which was conducted at Dedham, took place from May 31st to July 14th of the following year, Judge Webster Thayer presiding. They were convicted of murder in the first degree. We shall review here only the more important of the many legal steps which were taken during the six years intervening between their trial and their execution, to save the defendants from the penalty of death. During the two or three years immediately following their conviction a motion for a new trial as against the weight of evidence and a number of supplementary motions were filed, all of which were passed upon by Judge Thayer and

denied. On January 11th to 13th, 1926, an argument of appeal was made by Sacco and Vanzetti from conviction and from denial of the preceding motions, but without result. And on April 9th, 1927, Judge Thayer sentenced Sacco and Vanzetti to death. Shortly afterward, upon petition for executive clemency, Governor Fuller appointed an advisory committee, consisting of Abbott Lawrence Lowell, President of Harvard University, Robert Grant, a former judge, and Samuel W. Stratton, President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to review the cases. According to their report, the members of this committee considered three questions: Was the trial fairly conducted? Was the evidence subsequently discovered such that a new trial ought to have been granted? And, were they convinced beyond reasonable doubt that Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty? Taking these questions in order the report of this committee said that the record of the trial gave no evidence of prejudice, that they had found no subsequent evidence sufficient to justify a new trial, and that they were convinced that the cumulative weight of the evidence proved the guilt of the defendants. Governor Fuller accordingly gave his decision denying executive clemency. A petition was then addressed to Justice Holmes, of the United States Supreme Court, for a stay and extension of time in which to apply to this Court for a writ of certiorari. This petition, however, was denied by Justice Holmes on the ground that its request lay outside his jurisdiction. A similar petition was denied by Justice Stone. All attempts to save them failing, the defendants were executed on August 23rd, 1927.

Let us turn now to the evidence. Testimony which purported directly to identify Sacco or Vanzetti as participants in the crime was given by witnesses whose names are as follows: Faulkner, Dolbeare, Levangle, Reed, Mrs. Andrews, Tracy, Heron, Pelser, Miss Splaine, Miss Devlin, and Goodridge. Faulkner testified that he recognized Vanzetti as a man who had traveled with him on a train from Plymouth to South Braintree on the day of the crime. His characterization of the car in which they rode, however, was discredited by records of the railway company; and it was also shown that no tickets or cash fares were taken that day from passengers going from Plymouth to South Braintree. Dolbeare testified that he had seen Vanzetti in South Braintree on the day of the crime; but his testimony was thrown in doubt by the fact that he had been impaneled and called as a jurymen before being released to act as witness, and that he had made no effort to testify in the case before being called as a juror, no explanation being offered for this behavior. Levangle, a railroad gate-tender, testified that he saw Vanzetti driving the car in which the bandits rode. All other witnesses, however, on both sides denied that Vanzetti was driving the car; while four witnesses were produced who testified that Levangle, after the murder, had said that the driver was blonde (Vanzetti, in fact, was very dark) and that the occupants of the car had been unrecognisable. Reed, another gate-keeper, testified that Vanzetti had leaned out of the murder car and called something to him in clear, unmistakable English, Vanzetti, however, was shown to speak only broken and halting English. Mrs. Andrews testified that she had seen Sacco beneath the murder car, evidently working on it, before the robbery, and had spoken to him. This, however, was denied by a Mrs. Campbell who

was her companion at the time. A tailor, named Kurlansky, testified that Mrs. Andrews had told him an agent of the government was trying to force her to testify against Sacco and was holding her past bad record over her head. After the trial Mrs. Andrews signed an affidavit retracting her trial identification; but later she retracted the retraction, saying that the defense had worked on her emotions. An insurance company representative testified that Mrs. Andrews had had hysterical outbursts, and had tried to get money from his company as a result of a fit in which she had injured herself. Acquaintances testified that she did not have a reputation for truth telling. Tracy testified positively to seeing Sacco in South Braintree on the afternoon of the crime; but nearly a year had intervened between the crime and the time of identification. Heron testified to having seen Sacco acting nervously in the waiting room of the railroad station around noon of the day of the crime. He did not come forward as a witness for about six weeks after the event and had refused to talk to the defense investigators, and at the trial gave contradictory reasons for his refusal. Pelser testified that, looking out of a window where he was working, he had seen Sacco fire four shots. Four fellow workers, however, testified that Pelser was underneath a bench immediately after the shooting began. Pelser himself retracted his testimony after the trial, but reversed himself again when interviewed by the State's Attorney. Miss Splaine testified that she had seen Sacco at the scene of the crime. After the trial, however, it was proved that when Miss Splaine was first questioned, while being shown pictures of possible murderers, she had selected as the murderer a different person. Miss Devlin, who was present with Miss Splaine, had only a brief glimpse of a man in a fleeing automobile and both she and Miss Splaine had, at the preliminary hearing, expressed doubt about their identification, although they were positive at the trial. Goodridge identified Sacco as being present at the crime; but other witnesses testified that Goodridge before the trial had said he could not identify Sacco. As bearing upon the question of the adequacy of this testimony of eye-witnesses it is proper to state that Judge Thayer said, in denying the motion for a new trial in 1924, that the verdict could not have rested upon it. It should be noted, however, that the State's Attorney made much of these identifications in his summary, an event which was followed by the conviction of the accused.

A second part of the evidence adduced for conviction centered about a bullet which was found in the body of one of the murdered men, and which was alleged to have gone through the pistol carried by Sacco at the time of his arrest. Captain Proctor of the State Police testified that the bullet "was consistent with" being fired through Sacco's pistol. After the trial, however, he said that, unwilling as he was to testify that the bullet actually *had been* fired from that pistol, it had been previously agreed between himself and the State's attorney that he should give this answer to the latter's question concerning the relation between Sacco's pistol and the bullet. The defense attorney claimed that it seemed not incredible that the jurors understood by the phrase "consistent with" more than was really intended. As to the facts in this question, experts who were called upon to examine the bullet and the pistol disagreed as to whether Sacco's gun had fired the mortal

bullet. The weight of opinion, supported by evidence from measurements taken after the trial with a high-powered microscope, seemed to lie upon the side of the defendants.

The prosecuting attorney also urged against the defendants the fact that at the time of their arrest they were armed and that they carried a considerable amount of extra ammunition. It was claimed that the revolver found on Vanzetti at the time of his arrest had been taken by Sacco from the body of the murdered guard. The make and calibre of Vanzetti's revolver were the same as those of a revolver which Berardelli had been in the habit of carrying. There was, however, no testimony that Berardelli actually had carried his revolver, nor that it had been taken from him, except that no revolver was found on his body. Vanzetti claimed that this revolver had been purchased by him from a friend; and an attempt was made at the trial to trace back the history of the revolver to a prior owner.

A third line of evidence had to do with a cap which was found at the scene of the crime. The effort was made to prove that this cap had belonged to Sacco, through the contention that a hole displayed in the lining had resulted from Sacco's having hung it daily upon a nail in the factory where he worked. After the trial testimony was given before the Lowell Commission by a police officer that he himself had made the hole in the cap while looking in it for marks of identification. Now the record of the trial shows that the prosecuting attorney had made much of this 'nail hole' during the trial; and Judge Thayer afterwards, in denying a motion for a new trial, said that the hole had been produced by Sacco's having hung his cap upon a nail, and that the Supreme Court of Massachusetts had accepted this interpretation as evidence that it was Sacco's cap. The members of the Governor's reviewing committee failed to see in the challenging of this piece of evidence a ground sufficient for a new trial.

The remainder of the evidence produced against the defendants was based for the most part upon certain acts which were alleged to have proceeded from their 'consciousness of guilt.' The arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti in the street car followed shortly after their leaving the house of a certain Mr. Johnson, where they had attempted with two other men to secure an automobile for the purpose (as the defense claimed) of collecting and hiding radical literature for which they were responsible, and of which they wished to dispose because of their fear that a police drive against radicals was imminent. The prosecuting attorney maintained that their departure from Mr. Johnson's house followed immediately after Mrs. Johnson had left to telephone the police (it having been prearranged that she should notify the police should any Italian call to obtain a car from their garage), and that the men left immediately because they feared arrest for murder. It was further asserted that Sacco and Vanzetti had made movements as if to draw their weapons when arrested, and that this fact exhibited a consciousness of guilt. The defense attorney maintained that there was no proof that they had intended to draw their revolvers, and that, as a matter of fact they *could* easily have drawn them, and probably would, had they been such desperate characters as murderers seeking to escape. One of them in fact was not searched for weapons until some time after the arrest. If they

were really guilty of the murder and believed that Mrs. Johnson had informed the police, they would, according to the defense attorney, have made *more* than gestures toward the guns they carried. The defendants, however, by their own admission, had told lies when questioned by the police upon their arrest. They had also told lies when questioned by the District Attorney. These lies, the prosecuting attorney argued, were indications of their consciousness of guilt, in that they were attempts to divert suspicion from themselves as the perpetrators of the South Braintree crime. The attorney for the defense admitted the consciousness of guilt, but maintained that the guilt in question was connected solely with their activities as radical agitators and anarchists. There was also evidence from the police court record that the police had questioned them at first not regarding the Braintree murders, but upon their political beliefs. Some of the lies told by the defendants do not seem to relate to radicalism, though a majority are so related. Many of the lies appeared to be related neither to the murder nor to radicalism. A few of the lies might be construed as relating to the murder, a connection, however, which might have been due either to guilt, to some other motive for deception, or to chance. For example, Vanzetti lied concerning where he had procured his revolver. The prosecuting attorney maintained that this falsehood was intended to help in concealing the fact that this revolver had been taken from the body of the murdered guard. A different explanation, however, is possible; namely, that the lie was for the purpose of protecting from the police a friend from whom Vanzetti had bought the weapon. One of the statements relied on by the prosecution and particularly referred to by the members of the Lowell Commission in their report was Sacco's statement that on the day of the murder he had been working, when he later claimed that he had been in Boston seeking his passport. In this connection it should be noted, however, that Sacco, when originally questioned about the matter, expressed some uncertainty and that he seems never to have been very clear about dates.

So much for the evidence upon which the defendants were convicted. Let us now consider the evidence adduced by the defense in order to prove them innocent. One of the eye-witnesses, a man named Gould, who was close enough to the shooting to receive a bullet through his coat, had left his name with the police as an eye witness. The police, however, did not advise the defense of this fact. Some time after the trial, Gould was located by the defense and made an affidavit for them, stating that Sacco was not one of the murderers. Judge Thayer pointed out, however, that a year had elapsed between the time of the crime and the time when Gould saw Sacco. A large number of eye-witnesses who testified were positive that neither of the defendants was one of the murderers. An alibi was offered at least for one of the defendants. Witnesses testified to seeing Sacco in Boston at the time of the murder, and fixed the recollection of the date by several devices, especially by an Italian memorial dinner. Vanzetti's alibi, however, could not be connected in the memories of the witnesses with any specific event by which the date could be fixed. Further evidence for the innocence of the defendants, which came too late for the trial but not for the reviewing authorities, was the reported confession of a prisoner named Medeiros,



on November 18th, 1925. Medeiros had been convicted of murder and was in jail awaiting a retrial. His confession, which, it was learned later, had previously been sent to the authorities but had not been revealed, was later sent to Sacco, who received it in prison. The substance of this confession was that Medeiros himself was with the party, certain members of which committed the murder, and that Sacco and Vanzetti were not there. This evidence, however, was rejected by Judge Thayer, who decided that Medeiros, being a criminal, was untrustworthy, and that he was merely seeking to benefit, in his own defense, from a share in the large Sacco-Vanzetti defense fund. It was also repudiated by the members of the reviewing committee on the ground that it was merely a device to release Sacco and Vanzetti without incriminating Medeiros himself. From the legal standpoint, however, this interpretation is unsound since Medeiros would have been incriminated by such testimony if it had been accepted. Still another line of defense was presented in testimony concerning the character of the accused. Sacco and Vanzetti, though admitted anarchists and pacifists, were shown to have been steady, thrifty, and industrious in their habits. In contrast with this characterization it is to be noted that the report of Governor Fuller's committee described the South Braintree robbery as manifestly the work of experts in crime.

[The presentation of evidence as to the law-abiding character of the defendants was complicated by the following circumstances: On June 11th, 1920, when the defendants were still in custody, and three months before the Braintree murders had been charged against them, Vanzetti was indicted on the charge of participating in an attempted hold-up which had occurred in the preceding December at Bridgewater, Massachusetts. He was tried on this charge June 22nd to July 1st, at Plymouth. The prosecuting attorney produced witnesses who swore that they had seen Vanzetti at Bridgewater or in the car employed in the attempted robbery. There was also charged a consciousness of guilt on the part of Vanzetti as evidenced by the facts recorded above with reference to the Braintree case. The defense attorneys, on the other hand, produced witnesses who testified that they had seen Vanzetti peddling eels on the day of the crime, and fixed the day by a substantiated reference to an Italian custom of eating eels on that day. The prosecuting attorney charged collusion with reference to this testimony. The witnesses for the prosecution described Vanzetti at the time of the Bridgewater crime as wearing a short mustache, whereas defense witnesses testified that he had always worn a long mustache. Witnesses of the prosecution also disagreed as to the manner in which Vanzetti had been dressed. This trial resulted in the convicting and sentencing of Vanzetti for the Bridgewater hold-up. It should be noted that the record of Vanzetti's conviction for this crime was not introduced as evidence of his possible guilt in the trial dealing with the Braintree murders. It is true, however, that the trial, the conviction, and the fact that Vanzetti was then serving sentence had previously been reported in the newspapers and were common knowledge.

Now in the trial for the Braintree murders testimony about the good character of the defendants led to a conference between counsels. As a result of this conference, the following official announcement was made:

Personal impressions, of course, have little statistical value; and we must not forget the heroic efforts of the more critical journals, of the Defense Committee, and of outspoken men and

"The Commonwealth assents to the request of both of the defendants that all evidence heretofore offered in the course of this trial to the effect that either or both of said defendants bore the reputation of being peaceful and law-abiding citizens be stricken from the record . . . and be entirely disregarded by the jury. . . ." It is the opinion of at least one of the best qualified authorities who have written upon the case that this striking out of the character evidence of the defendants was in return for a promise on the part of the prosecuting attorneys not to refer to Vanzetti's conviction in the Bridgewater case.]

We come, finally, to the evidence brought before the reviewing authorities as to whether the trial itself was fairly conducted. Though there was scarcely evidence of unfairness in the court record itself, Judge Thayer, upon one instance, was shown to have questioned a witness much after the manner of a prosecuting attorney. The argument of the defense that the defendants' consciousness of guilt had arisen from their radical activities rather than from connection with the murders, gave the prosecuting attorney a legitimate opportunity to cross-question them at considerable length about their radicalism and to bring out in court the fact that they were active radical agitators and had been draft-evaders during the war. The date of trial itself was less than three years after the close of the World War and during a period of campaigning against radicals by the police. Concerning the question of the personal prejudice of Judge Thayer, there is little evidence in the court record itself; and some of the jurymen later testified before the reviewing committee that when the case went to the jury they were not sure which side the Judge favored. Some spectators of the trial, however, testified that a definite prejudice on the part of Judge Thayer had been manifested. A professor of law at Dartmouth College testified before the reviewing committee that in November, 1925, just after his denial of the various motions for a new trial, Judge Thayer had said in private conversation, as nearly as he could remember: "Did you see what I did with those anarchistic bastards the other day. I guess that will hold them for a while," and further utterances of a similar character.

For aid in the preparation of this summary the writer acknowledges his indebtedness to a valuable work entitled, *The Sacco-Vanzetti Case*, by Osmund K. Fraenkel (American Trials Series, Knopf, 1931.) Readers desiring a thorough, impartial, and at the same time interesting account, are referred to this volume. Mr. Fraenkel has also been so kind as to aid the writer in connection with a number of the details of the present summary. A more comprehensive report is to be found in the publication of the full court record, entitled *The Sacco-Vanzetti Case: Transcript of the Record of the Trial of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in the Courts of Massachusetts and Subsequent Proceedings, 1920-27*. Five volumes, with a supplementary volume on the Bridgewater case. Henry Holt and Company, 1928-1929.

women the world over. Large sums of money had been raised for the defense, and urgent appeals to the authorities had been made by individuals of high intellectual and personal reputation. But allowing for all this, it is still probable that the majority of the American people were not critically affected or disturbed about the execution. Men of power and influence competent to bring about a change of sentence approved the act. Other authorities, though not directly approving, placed a meticulous observance of precedent ahead of whatever reasons could be found in favor of an interference with the execution. Business men and jurists sent dispatches heaping praise upon a judge and a governor who could 'so courageously do their duty.' Ministers delivered sermons upon the sanctity of the law. Solid and conservative leaders of local labor unions adopted what was called a 'patriotic and sensible' attitude in refusing actively to support the condemned men. The editorials of many newspapers either praised the proceedings of the trial and investigation or discussed the matter as a 'timely topic' without voicing a criticism of the courts. But in addition to these positive actions, the greatest and most significant fact of all is that the vast majority of American citizens either favored the execution, or through silence gave to the authorities the impression of their tacit confidence and support. Business men, professional men, teachers, farmers, artisans and laborers, who together could have brought to bear that ultimate and irresistible voice which we call 'public opinion,' accepted the sentence with a shrug or with satisfaction, many of them believing that it was mainly the 'radical element' who were stirring up suspicion against our duly constituted authorities.

To a mind filled with doubt as to the evidence upon which Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted the thought of this army of complacent supporters presents a burning question. Are fair play and kindness really dead; are most of us ready, upon a false but respectable pretext, to shirk all responsibility for justice and protection toward those whom we dislike? Or shall we say that the American people, though usually kind and considerate in their relationships, became on this occasion grossly cruel and incapable of surveying facts and weighing conclusions? No ordinary causes could have blinded the eyes of so many, the

exalted as well as the humble. I, for one, still believe that Americans are fairly humane people. I also believe that the evidence brought forward against Sacco and Vanzetti could not have been considered upon any grounds of reason or logic as sufficient to convict them of the crime with which they were charged. It is hard to concede that the host of men and women who by word or silence condemned Sacco and Vanzetti were fundamentally cruel. If, however, we accept the alternative explanation, that of a widespread distortion of judgment, we are faced by the problem of finding its cause. The question cannot be dismissed by a reference to the prevalent bias against foreigners and radicals; such prejudice, though important, is only a partial explanation. Older and more universal illusions of thinking were at work; and these we must examine if we are to arrive at an understanding of this tragic event.

## II

If, from the few clues which any one person can assemble, a guess were to be made at the most common attitude toward this case, one would characterize it as a feeling of impersonal detachment. The question of the innocence or guilt of these men was not regarded by ordinary citizens as their own affair. Sacco and Vanzetti were believed to have passed through a duly constituted procedure known as the Massachusetts courts. A court is conceived as a 'system of justice' and is, therefore, believed to function automatically in rendering correct decisions. To quote a comment published in the *Philadelphia Trades Union News*: "The question of guilt was legally adjudicated by the lawfully constituted authorities of the State of Massachusetts after seven years examination of the evidence." A kind of supernaturalism thus seems to invest the officers of our courts and government. They are functionaries in a system believed to operate above the heads of mortals with the precision of an almost perfect machine.

The qualification 'almost' is of course needed, for no machine, no matter how skillfully constructed, can be absolutely without flaw. But occasional erroneous decisions should, in the common opinion, be charged not against the inherent justice of the system, but to its technical imperfections. Such lapses of the legal ma-

chinery, it is usually believed, do not justify criticism on the part of the layman. The average citizen, one thinks, is remote in time and place from the issue; he does not have the first hand evidence which the court surveys. He is lacking, moreover, in the mastery of the law, the authority, and even the general competence with which our judges are endowed. None of us, if given a chance, could set up a system which would work one half so well as our present scheme. Whether one agrees with the decisions of our courts or not, it is usually considered that the law must be allowed to 'run its course.' The consequence of this view is that, since it is the legal system, not citizens, which is regarded as competent to try and condemn criminals, the responsibility for erroneous convictions must be left entirely to our judicial officials. As for ordinary citizens, the operations of the courts are as far removed from their personal responsibility as they transcend their understanding or their power to alter them.

For an instructive comparison let us suppose that a man is removed from civilization and placed upon a lonely island with two other persons. Now imagine that he has discovered one of these persons trying by some treachery to kill the other. He would, no doubt, be quick and certain in placing the responsibility for this impending deed, and would probably do all he safely could to protect the life of the individual threatened. Suppose now that the same observer should witness, in a civilized community, the legal execution of a prisoner whom he believes to be innocent of the crime for which he was sentenced. Responsibility is in this case difficult to trace. The executioner, who appears to be calmly doing his duty, does not present the appearance of a murderer. Although the observer's sense of justice is outraged, there is no one in the picture against whom he may feel indignation or whom he may attack in defense of the wrongly condemned victim. He must therefore submit to the inevitable. He must believe, or act as though he believes, that a life is being taken not by human agencies, but by an impersonal judicial system.

The logic of this conception is as monstrous as it is absurd. Men are killed, in the last analysis, by appliances or weapons in the hands of other men, not by abstract processes or systems. Yet the notion that executions are the work of the latter agencies

is probably shared by the majority of citizens throughout the country. Can we not strip the procedure of criminal prosecution and punishment of its judicial parlance and look at it with the purpose of trying to see exactly what has happened? To do this successfully we must reverse the legal order of arrest, conviction, sentence, and execution, proceeding, as it were, backward from the final event. Let us now see what the result of such an analysis would be.

Shortly after midnight on that night of August twenty-second three men,<sup>8</sup> following one another at short intervals, walked into a small room in the Charlestown prison where other men applied electrodes to their head and limbs and killed them by turning on an electric current. The men knew they were going to die, but they went to their death without resistance; because they knew that to struggle was useless. Had they fought, their captors would have overpowered them and would have killed them anyway. Even if they could have fought their way free from these captors, they would soon have encountered a larger body of men who would have brought them back to their death. This staff in turn would have been increased, if necessary, to include forces of men (policemen and soldiers) throughout the entire country. But why were all these men so ready to support and consummate the killing of these three persons? First, they were committed to a promise to put into effect the words spoken in court session by a man known as a judge; and for the fulfillment of these promises they received a stated recompense. Secondly, they knew that when they should seek to carry out these judicial orders the people of the country would not only not hinder them, but would give their moral and, if necessary, their physical support. A large number, moreover, of these people of the country had contributed a fund (taxes) from which these officers' salaries were regularly paid, and would therefore expect these men to do 'their duty.' An order having been given by the judge, the executioners, backed by the support of the policemen, therefore proceeded to act in the prescribed manner. The behavior of the judge, in turn, was determined by the following circumstances. He was expected to

---

<sup>8</sup> Celestino Medeiros, a prisoner sentenced for a separate murder, was electrocuted along with Sacco and Vanzetti.

pronounce instructions (sentences) for dealing in stated ways with convicted individuals. 'Convicted,' in turn, means that twelve other persons (jurors) had decided that the individual in question has committed certain stated acts. The judge was required and was paid by the people in the particular state to pronounce such penal instructions, a duty which was likewise regarded as proper and mandatory by the people of the country at large. Long-standing attitudes of the people (constitution and laws) had previously determined not only the acts which were to be considered as deserving sentence (crimes) but also the punishment to be commanded by the judge. The jurymen were likewise required and were paid by the people's money to listen to the evidence and to return their 'verdict.' There were also certain habits among 'legal' officials of selecting the jurors, hearing evidence, and similar matters, habits which have been taught by the older officials and teachers of legal procedure to members of each succeeding generation. Finally, or first in the process from the point of time, there were certain men paid by the people at large (police) who had seized, or 'arrested,' the prisoners and had brought them before the judge and jurors. We thus arrive at the initial step in the series of acts which terminated in the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. It is to be especially noted that at the beginning, and in fact throughout this series of acts, we find a steady support through the habitual attitudes of the great majority of citizens. Such support may have been unconscious and passive; but it was none the less genuine and fundamental to the entire process.

This reversal of our criminal procedure leads to conclusions very different from those of the familiar conception. For we have explained the course of events leading up to the execution solely in terms of *individuals and their behavior*. We have traced the entire historical sequence in terms of the facts of specific human beings. At no point do we find an abstract 'legal process' or a 'judicial system' stepping in as a cause. Nowhere can we actually see or hear the process of 'the Court' but only the actions or the words of a certain man called the judge and of other individuals whom we call attorneys, witnesses, and jurymen. Such words as 'law,' 'court,' and 'due process' are not needed to describe

the observable events by which Sacco and Vanzetti met their death, however serviceable they may be for rationalizing them or for interpreting their 'societal purpose.' Our courts of justice, so far as human observation is concerned, are simply the way in which prosecutors, judges, jurors, and citizens generally think and act together in the treatment of accused persons. Since, therefore, an execution is the work of men and women, men and women are responsible,—the judge, the jurymen, and the executioners as principals, and all the citizens of the nation in an accessory rôle. When the victim of such a killing is an individual clearly dangerous to the lives of others the act might conceivably be spoken of as a justifiable homicide committed by citizens in self-defense. When, however, charges of this sort can not be sustained there is nothing, except the number of accomplices and the complexity of their rôles, to distinguish it from ordinary murder. In the latter instance to say, as many do, that the unfortunate man is simply the victim of the law, of judicial processes, or of an unavoidable 'miscarriage of justice,' is not only to indulge in vain metaphors, but to obscure the situation so that the responsibility cannot be placed.

### III

The preceding analysis applies not to juristic conceptions alone, but to a large field of popular thinking. There are various words in common usage such as the State, the Church, the School, and Business, which imply an order of being, expressed somehow through individuals, but really superior to them both in power and in validity of purpose. Taken collectively these are spoken of as 'the institutions of Society.' We are seldom definite as to what they are; but we impute to them half-consciously a kind of superhuman reality and significance. In order to understand this conception more fully let us take an analogy from the field of physics. If we scatter upon a sheet of paper a small quantity of iron filings and place beneath the under surface of the sheet an ordinary magnet, the particles of iron will be seen, upon tapping the paper, to re-arrange themselves into a ring-shaped pattern of curved lines joining the two points on the paper which lie just above the poles of the magnet. To an observer who did not



see beneath the paper and who knew nothing of magnetism, it might seem that some invisible force had suddenly seized upon the filings, pushing them, as though with an unseen hand, into an orderly and definite arrangement. This 'unseen force,' conceived as operating from without upon the material elements before us, comes somewhere near the common notion of an institution. We have only to substitute human beings in daily life for the iron filings, and to select an observer who is ignorant of the principles of human behavior; and the comparison is evident. An institution is believed to be some unseen and intangible force, not the same as men and women yet acting through them, which directs human behavior into the channels of custom and social order.

But this analogy, like most others, is not quite complete. For having abstracted the institutional forces from individuals, we are not content to let them rest as impersonal agencies. We illogically read back into them the attributes of human beings; not all the attributes, to be sure, but only the good ones. We think of them as imbued with ethical purposes and animated by the common will. They are therefore regarded as altruistic and just. Embracing as they do the highest human ideals, we feel that they demand our loyal observance and protection. A personal and moral character is thus given to institutions quite out of keeping with our notion of laws in the realm of nature.

This conception of the social order, widely accepted both in theory and practice, seems to me to be pure superstition. Just as a physicist would scoff at the idea of an invisible manikin pushing the iron filings about, so a student of human behavior would probably reject the doctrine of abstract social forces capable of propelling men and women in the pathways of sanctioned conduct. He would reject such an idea as an established explanation, however, not on the ground that he is certain no social forces exist; but because, on the one hand, there is no explicit evidence for such forces, and on the other, because such an hypothesis seems an obstacle rather than an aid to scientific research. We are by no means denying that there are definite patterns of behavior (just as there was a pattern of iron filings) which may quite legitimately be spoken of as 'institutions.' But no evidence is at hand to show that these patterns are forces, or that they have any power of

their own to impose themselves upon mankind. Institutions, so far as we have any knowledge, are not *causes* of human activity any more than the magnetic field is the cause of the iron filings taking a certain position. Both these conceptions are 'implicit' realities; they are ways of describing the arrangements of objects involved. In order to understand the magnetic field a physicist studies the movement and position of iron filings when in proximity to certain (magnetic) substances. Similarly, to understand institutions a social student must examine the behavior of human beings when they are in the presence of a common stimulus or in a common situation. The 'State,' for example, consists when so regarded, of certain similar and predictable ways in which the individual citizens react toward one another and toward certain individuals who are designated as officials. To be included with these ways of behaving are the characteristic actions of the officials, both toward one another and toward ordinary citizens. The 'Law' represents the common habits of the people in situations where the satisfaction of one person's needs is likely to come into conflict with the satisfactions of the needs of others. 'Business' and 'Industry' indicate standardized common habits of responding to raw materials, commodities, machinery, currency, and tokens of credit. The 'Church' is represented by the mutual behavior of the members of the congregation, and of the minister, the deacons, and other ecclesiastical functionaries.

To test this formula we have merely to imagine people abandoning simultaneously all the common habits through which their institutions are said to be expressed. In that case the institutions themselves, so far as present human experience is concerned, would pass out of existence. If every motorist should park his car wherever it suited his convenience, and should start and stop regardless of traffic signals, it is difficult to see what reality our code of traffic laws would have other than that of a purely historic document. If the same course were pursued with regard to every regulation of human life, then law itself would, for all practical human purposes, be non-existent. When people stop worshipping together, when they cease to follow certain established practices regarding their religious loyalties and devotions, where will be the institution we call the Church? In every case we fail to find

support for the belief that institutions are over and above the people through whom they function, or are vested in certain officials upon whom they bestow a sanction for the ordering of conduct. We experience them only in individuals who are behaving according to habits of concerted behavior which they have been taught. We do not see them directing behavior as if from without or through the mediation of officials. They control human life, so far as we can see, only in the sense that individuals control themselves. We have not even discovered them to have any ideals, purposes, ethical status, or ground of authority beyond that which is possessed by men and women themselves.

#### IV

We have already discussed the prevailing fiction that the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was the last step in a process of our transcendent legal institutions. Let us now glance at some of the implications of this view. How, we may ask, are these abstract 'institutions' supposed to operate in connection with the particular judges, prosecutors, and jurors involved? Our tracing backward of the court procedure gave only the formal aspect of the picture. We showed how the arrest, conviction, and execution, as acts in the proper discharge of the officials' duties, were supported by the institutional attitudes of the people. Once the accused men were arrested some legal disposition, of course, had to be made of the case. Once they were convicted, the judge was obliged to pass sentence. Once sentenced, the prison officials had to carry out their execution. The jurors, however, were not obliged to convict; nor was the judge obliged to give certain rulings and charges which may have influenced conviction, or which made impossible another trial or a review by higher authorities through which the conviction might have been set aside. Nor, for that matter, were the police authorities, in their search for criminals, bound, in the first instance, to seize these particular men and to hand them over for trial. What then *really* accounts for the content of the actions of all these persons by whom the prosecution and trial were conducted?

At this point a consistent institution-worshipper is forced by the nature of his belief to return an amazing answer. Our system

of justice, being above human control, is supposed (by implication, at least) to have reached down and so gripped and permeated policemen, jurymen, prosecuting attorney, and judge, that they at once became completely and perfectly just. Like iron filings in the grip of an invisible magnetic force, they are supposed to have automatically seized the right persons, to have fairly construed the evidence for and against them, and to have pronounced a correct decision. Ambition, malice, bias of race, class and creed, temperament, viewpoints possessed since childhood, the lingering grip of war-time emotions,—all these are supposed to have vanished as by a magic wand when judge and jurors took their places in the courtroom. Dropping for the time the entire remainder of their personalities they were, to become puppets in the hands of an omniscient and providential Justice. When Judge Thayer passed the sentence of death upon Sacco and Vanzetti, it was as though it were not a judgment given by himself as an individual; it was, if we could accept his own concluding statement, the sentence of 'The Law.'

Absurd as this psychology of institutionalism must appear, it was nevertheless conspicuous also throughout the report of those who were called by Governor Fuller to review the trial. The members of the reviewing committee appeared to be bent with rapt gaze upon the trial procedure, and almost oblivious to the person of the Judge himself. Their report acknowledged that Judge Thayer was "indiscreet in conversation with outsiders during the trial" and that he was guilty of "a grave breach of official decorum." Do not such admissions suggest at least the possibility that some of these 'indiscreet conversations' were derogatory to the men on trial; and if so would they not have been true indications of bias? Yet the matter of prejudice was never fairly faced. The phrases quoted above may be regarded as a rebuke to Judge Thayer, not so much for being biased and hence creating the risk of unfairly influencing the trial, but for talking in so free a manner as to *give rise to the impression* that he was biased, and that the machinery of justice might not be running smoothly. His offense, according to the reviewing committee, was not against Sacco and Vanzetti, but against the reputation of his institution. His fault was not prejudice, but official impropriety. The formal court

record, the 'legal process' itself, showed no bias; the jurors did not 'remember' being improperly influenced; therefore, reasoned the members of the reviewing committee, bias could not have existed.

## V

The view which ignores individual realities for the fiction of transcendent and perfect institutions is to be met in many fields of institutional behavior. Allusions to the 'nature and spirit of our institutions' roll more smoothly off the tongue than the careful descriptions of the complete acts and motives of individuals. No small portion of the responsibility for this loose thinking may be ascribed to officials in various fields, and to candidates aspiring to such positions. Lip-service to our cherished institutions is a never failing resource of campaign orators. Many a party leader steers his followers safely past the shoals of concrete issues too treacherous to be handled in realistic detail, and finds a harbor in the shelter of vague concepts, such as 'the Constitution' and 'American Ideals.' Judges, senators, governors, military officials, and presidents are wont to stress publicly the need of respect for the institutions of our country. Especially noteworthy is the tendency of leaders in different fields to support one another by pleading publicly for the veneration of one another's institutions. Thus a president of the United States, while extolling as his principal theme the sanctity of law and government, has spoken not less eloquently of the importance of business and other institutional activities as forming the very foundation of the country's progress. Entrepreneurs, financiers, and educators are quick to repay this service by a plea for loyalty to the government. The formal invocation pronounced by ministers in political assemblies, patriotic meetings, and business men's clubs and conventions seems to lend to the institutions represented the auspices of a divine sanction, and represents at the same time a compliment to the institution of the church. All institutional officials join in concert in the veneration of the institution of 'the Law,' without whose 'guiding spirit' the others could not be preserved. Legal officials, throughout many generations, have developed a special technique for maintaining the fiction of the transcendence of their institution. 'Contempt of court' is based upon the theory that disobedient or disrespectful

conduct toward the judge is an offense not against a mere person, but against the dignity of the Law. The judge, in the etiquette of formal trial procedure, must be addressed or referred to as 'the Court.' By such means the fiction of the superhuman authority, the impersonal justice and infallibility of the legal institution, is maintained. Upon a similar footing rests the protection and prestige of ecclesiastical authorities. Church creed and ritual give to the worshippers a feeling of solidarity and belief in the permanence and authority of religious institutions which would be impossible in informal and spontaneous devotions. The Church is regarded by many as a spiritual principle, removed from the world of time and space, directing the worship of its communicants, guiding their conduct, and serving as their arbiter and their ideal in the practical affairs of life. Excommunication and expulsion are means of punishing those who publicly challenge the authority of the institution or who, in some manner, bring disgrace upon its symbols.

The reasons why officials tend to foster the belief in the transcendent reality and purpose of their institutions are fairly obvious. Upon the respect of the people for the office of the functionary his vocation and his livelihood depend. Such respect also is a source for enhancing his power; for if people will accept the transcendence, moral preëminence, and authority of institutions, they will be more likely to regard the word of institutional leaders as sacred and final. It is, of course, conceded that in extolling the institutions of which they are the spokesmen, officials are not always consciously selfish or insincere. They doubtless share the popular reverence for institutions themselves, and feel in many cases a correspondingly high sense of duty in relation to their office. But the exploiting of institutional fictions nevertheless persists; and the prestige which it conveys is used sometimes for good, and sometimes for evil, purposes.

## VI

Returning now to the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, we can better understand why the leaders of our institutions were ranged so solidly in support of Judge Thayer, the Governor of Massachusetts, and the reviewing committee. We can more readily ex-

plain why they believed the decision just, or why, though inwardly doubting, they maintained a solid front against any sort of interference. To have intervened, or even to have questioned, would have been to have weakened the popular belief in the infallibility of our courts. It would have given them the character of ordinary human judgment and motives. From this it might have been but a step to the discovery that other institutions also are merely our present ways of doing things, merely ways in which the officials and the people act, and that beyond this they have neither validity nor sanction. We do not mean that this reasoning was entirely conscious on the part of institutional officials; but it is nevertheless probable that in many cases it was present.

There were, of course, other inward reasons for the behavior of the officials, motives as obscure and complex as human nature itself. To advance any one explanation alone would be to oversimplify the problem. With some, no doubt, it was a matter of pride in the prestige and tradition of leadership enjoyed by the old families of Massachusetts. To have others sit in judgment upon their acts was not their wont. Others were impelled by a nationalistic pride which resented criticism and intrusion from abroad. Intolerance of radicalism doubtless contributed its share. But these factors, it seems to me, could not have prevailed against the duty to set right a manifest injustice, had it not been for the support of the fictions centering about legal institutions, and the use of these fallacies by officials in justifying and maintaining their position.

Other court decisions had, it is true, been reversed by higher courts; and other governors had commuted the sentences of men condemned to death. But this case was different. It had become the subject of discussion the world over. Strong charges of prejudice had been levelled against those who had conducted the trial. The system of criminal justice of Massachusetts had been severely impugned. Those immediately concerned in the affair were no doubt deeply stirred. There was at stake not only the respect for the symbols of the Massachusetts courts and, indirectly, of the entire Government of the United States, but their own personal reputation and influence as men of honor. The vindication, therefore, of these institutions meant the vindication of themselves.

Upon the popular acceptance of the sanctity of our institutions they rested both their public justification and the judgment of their private consciences. It was the last straw in a desperate situation. Comforted, however, by the hope that the institutional spirit of higher court officials and of college presidents would sustain them, they held their ground.

And well they had considered. Governor Fuller's committee failed to sift thoroughly all the evidence both of the original trial and of later date before reaching a decision as to the guilt of the men accused. They submitted, instead, a document belittling the indications of innocence and expressing their belief that the trial and conviction had been fair. Justices of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts also upheld the final authority of the trial judge's decision, though, if certain competent lawyers are to be believed, they could have found adequate legal ground for granting a new trial. A justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, to whom an appeal was made, a man widely known for liberal-mindedness and personal integrity, refused to intervene on the ground that the affair was one which lay outside his jurisdiction, in that it was a State Court decision which did not raise a question of the infringement of the Constitution of the United States. Supporting by their acts or their acquiescence the notion that the law is above the heads of human beings and must be held safe from challenge, believing that 'due process' must be placed ahead of two human lives, the higher officers of government allowed the 'justice' of the Massachusetts officials to take its tragic course.

The reader may here protest that in refusing to interfere beyond their lawful province our higher officials were really subordinating their personal feelings to fulfillment of their trust. It is not for selfish or corrupt reasons that men such as these uphold the inviolability of the legal process. Unwillingness to tamper with the due process of law is one of the highest duties; and the policy of unwavering allegiance to this duty is best in the long run, since it is our only safeguard against lawlessness and tyranny. A part of this objection is readily conceded. There is probably little conscious deception or self-seeking in the tendency of officials of this character to protect the sacredness of their



institutions. The belief in the transcendence of institutions becomes a deeply rooted habit, a part of the very character of institutional leaders, and may at times be the accompaniment not of self-seeking, but of loyalty and devotion to high ideals. But granting all this, it is still true that such a devotion to symbols may at times blind the eyes of the best of judges to the clear facts of justice. At times this belief, whose fictitious character is not clearly recognized, may serve as a conscious justification for decisions which might not otherwise be made. It may become a means of unwittingly tipping the scales toward the side of the vested authorities. Probably most of our higher court officials are men of honor according to their lights. Their defect lies in a lack of insight into the motives underlying their own philosophy. For complete engrossment in a system of thinking which, though consistent, is based upon an institutional fiction, may distort the moral perspective of well-meaning men.

We must now consider the objection that inflexible adherence to legal process, even to the ignoring of personal motives which may be manipulating that process, is the only possible safeguard against lawlessness and tyranny. With this interpretation, I, for one, cannot agree. If citizens are taught to believe that 'Law' is an institution over their heads, a Being of superhuman justice and intelligence, then all distinctions between separate laws will vanish. All law becomes one. In this case a violation of any single law or legal precedent might imply disrespect for law in general, and might tend, perhaps, toward the lawlessness of citizens and the abuse of power by officials. Is it not possible, however, for jurists to assume, and to encourage in citizens, a very different attitude? Instead of accepting the sacred authority of The Law as such, citizens might be trained to think in terms of the existence of separate laws,—these laws consisting of the commonly accepted practices of individuals, and deriving their sanction wholly from the fact that such practices and the sentiments supporting them are practically universal. If this were the prevailing ideology of legal institutions, there would be little danger that an overstepping of one legal precedent which, moreover, was coming to be regarded as a doubtful one, particularly when such overstepping was for the purpose of preventing a possible

injustice of shocking magnitude, would lead to the violation of laws in general. Nor would the act of one judge, in forestalling by this irregularity a grave injustice, justify other officials in over-riding their precedents for purely selfish purposes.

## VII

Concerted officialdom, though important, was but one factor in that universal institution-worship through which Sacco and Vanzetti were put to death. A great body of American citizens formed an equally earnest group of supporters. They were not dupes, merely echoing the fine phrases of jingoists; they, too, had definite interests in preserving the fiction of the sanctity of the legal process. And in these hidden motives of the many we find the most obscure, but perhaps the most significant, aspect of the problem. On the whole our institutional habits in all fields have been used to the economic advantage of a substantial group of citizens who have been called by some "the ruling class." Habits which we, as individuals of that group, have found useful we naturally wish to preserve. Should these practices be challenged by minorities, or by outsiders to whom they are less beneficial than to ourselves, we fly to their rescue. In fighting such innovators we can rally citizens more effectively for the struggle if we use the slogan not merely of preserving our advantageous habits, but of "safeguarding of our Country's institutions!" Detaching the institutions from human beings not only conceals their true nature, but permits us to endow them with qualities of superhuman wisdom and virtue. The appeal for their preservation thus takes the form of a patriotic obligation and a sacred duty.

There are in this country large groups of people who derive an income, of one sort or another, from the system of privately invested capital. Vast numbers of employees of corporations operating under this system, barring periods of depression, are paid wages high enough to live comfortably upon and to maintain their families. Hordes of small business men earn a livelihood in private enterprises and cherish the hope of so enlarging their businesses as to become fairly well to do. Well paid mechanics and artisans form another element who are usually satisfied with our

present economic organization. To these we must add the investors in foreign securities and industries abroad, together with a great throng of governmental employees and the personnel of the army and navy, who are all supported by public funds. All these, in times of prosperity at least, are the beneficiaries and the advocates of our present economic system and our pattern of institutional habits. But upon the horizon of this contented scene a dark cloud is arising. Foreign malcontents—socialists, communists, atheists, and anarchists, are challenging here, as they have already challenged abroad, the fundamental assumptions of capitalistic society. They are questioning our habits of organizing our business, dividing our profits, and running our government. Something must be done, in the opinion of the conservative majority, before these intruders undermine our prosperity. In searching for a basis of defense, what more natural and effective method could one find than to elevate these ways of running our business and government from mere human habits into "sacred institutions," and to revere them as established by the Founding Fathers under a divine purpose which guides human destiny? An institutional fiction thus becomes the bulwark of people's wealth and the defender of their security.

In addition to motivation within the economic sphere, there is to be found a certain reverence for institutions which is based upon individual peculiarities of attitude and temperament. A fundamentalist, whether in religion, patriotism, or morals, is usually a lusty advocate of the established order. He finds in it a rock and refuge of stability and an ideal of personal exaltation. Like the capitalists he derives the dignity and authority of his opinions from those established guides of human conduct—the spokesmen of his country's institutions. People also who have descended from the so-called 'original American stock,' whether they be Klan members of the Middle West or Bostonians of Beacon Hill, are likely to view with alarm the influx of foreign populations and influences into their country. Men with alien accent, unfamiliar habits, and baffling ideas are intruding themselves into our communities, our schools, our places of recreation, our industries, our business districts, and even our offices of government. The 'original' Americans are engaging in a bitter but

losing battle against this growing menace. There is little wonder that they rally like crusaders, trying to keep in operation the institutional habits through which their coffers were enriched and their creeds accepted as the spirit and destiny of the nation. We can readily understand why the slogan, "In Defense of American Institutions," has become the motto of at least one fundamentalist journal whose pages seethe with racial and religious hatreds.

Official attitudes aside, abundant support of institutional fictions may therefore be found among the conservative masses of the population. And it was this attitude which was reflected in the complacency with which most citizens seemed to view the case of Sacco and Vanzetti. These condemned men, 'self confessed radicals and atheists,' had been pronounced guilty of taking human life. But were they not also guilty of a greater crime, that of striking at the very foundations of government and of law and order? The killing of one of our citizens may at times be condoned, but never the attempt to destroy our institutions; for the offense here is not against human beings, but against standards which are to be regarded as divine. Echoes of comment heard over the country betrayed this attitude: "They are simply a couple of radicals trying to escape the chair." . . . "If they weren't radicals we wouldn't be hearing anything about the case." . . . 'I would rather trust the opinion of our courts than the wild howlings of reds.' . . . "Whether murderers or not, we are better off without such dangerous agitators." . . . "We mustn't give in to them; innocent or guilty, we can't afford to encourage these Bolsheviks and anarchists." . . . "The dignity of our laws must be upheld." . . . "We know how to run our institutions without any foreign interference."

And after the tension of waiting for Governor Fuller's decision was over, these defenders of our folkways breathed easily again. From people of many stations, both high and low, the telegrams and letters poured in, favorable, it was reported, in the ratio of five to one. "You have performed as great a public service to the State and nation as has any governor in any crisis," said Major-General Edwards. "You have been . . . worthy of the best traditions of the Commonwealth," cried Bishop William Law-

rence of Massachusetts. The chairman of a Y. M. C. A. library committee exulted: "God reigns and the government at Washington still lives!" "You have restored our waning faith in American institutions," wrote one feminine admirer of the Governor. By such as these there was fostered the widespread illusion that an unjust deed becomes noble if only we do it in the name of 'Our Country's institutions.'

### VIII

We have now before us at least a partial answer to our opening question: How is it that men and women who value kindness and fair play in their daily lives can complacently assent to the prolonged imprisonment and killing of two men against whom no adequate cause has been proved? Prejudice, suspicion, and deep national and class hatreds have played their part; but these alone are insufficient as an explanation. A key to the full answer is to be found not in personal antagonism alone, but in certain widespread and cherished fictions regarding our institutions. The execution was made possible for 'Christian' citizens to tolerate because it was unthinkingly attributed to our judicial process rather than to the acts of men and women. Since this process is regarded as being above human reach, our institutions, and not our people, are believed to be responsible. Since courts of justice are endowed with a superhuman aspect, their operation, moreover, is believed to be not only inevitable, but right. It is disloyal to question them and a patriotic duty to defend them. The officials of government are thought to become moral automatons, fulfilling by necessity the purpose of the institutions of which they are the human agents. This series of fictions is supported by a wide range of motives, the operation of which, behind the veil of institutional symbols, is largely unconscious. Officials by encouraging these fictions vindicate themselves and enhance their own power, while at the same time escaping the responsibility of clear and unbiased thinking. Common citizens support these fictions as respectable means of preserving their economic advantages, and of experiencing a sense of self-assurance and collective exaltation.

Two strong and conflicting motives are at the bottom of this

projection of men's deeds upon their institutions. The first of these is the probable desire of most men and women to live a decent life, to be kind rather than cruel, and to give and receive justice with an even hand. Christian standards, at least in theory, prevail in social interaction, and no clear and open violation of humanitarian principles can be tolerated. On the other hand, our citizens find individuals at large who, by challenging our traditions, seem to be undermining our prosperity and peace. The 'foreign atheist' and 'anarchist,' though lurid stereotypes known to most of us only through hearsay, are feared as potential destroyers of our security. The second motive of the conflict, therefore, is our desire to be rid of these harrowing enemies. Yet how can we be rid of them without fair cause? How can we reconcile clannish intolerance, selfishness, and cruelty with our kinder and juster motives? As in many of our inner conflicts we are finally led to an indirect and, for the most part, unconscious solution of the dilemma. We can place the burden of the act upon our institutions. It is for the sake of our institutions rather than of ourselves that we believe it to be performed; and it is not we ourselves, but our Courts and the 'due process of the Law,' which removes our common enemy. Such an act, moreover, becomes commendable in aspect since it is done, supposedly, in defense of institutions which are inherently wise and just. Hence it is to be not merely condoned, but praised as a courageous and patriotic performance of duty. Though usually unconscious in its operation, this process of rationalization helps us to gain our selfish ends, while escaping, at the same time, the reproach of our kinder natures.

If the preceding analysis be a true one, it has an important bearing upon our ideas of societal ethics and education. For it suggests that, in place of the present emphasis upon our national ideals, traditions, and institutions we need a sense of balance and an insight in our lives as individuals. For oaths of allegiance to high principles associated with 'our Republic' we should do well to substitute a just and discriminating character in our citizens. Instead of teaching reverence for the Constitution, that "most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain

and purpose of man," we might try to instill in our youth, *as individuals*, the spirit which we believe that document to embody. The theory that by teaching about our institutions we can inculcate their ideals in the rising generation is psychologically doubtful. Such vague and general principles of conduct cannot be transferred to children from the pages of documents; they must be worked out in the contacts of daily living. In order to derive inspiration for justice and humanity from the Constitution, an individual must first have these qualities within himself. No other means will bridge that chasm between our 'noble' institutions and the crimes committed in their name, between the luster of our ideals and the dullness with which we killed Sacco and Vanzetti. When we shall have broken down the fallacy that our institutions can think our thoughts and perform our actions for us, it will not be so easy to commit ourselves to the cruel and base stupidities we now display. We shall not so readily tolerate injustices upon the ground that, not we ourselves, but 'the government' is responsible. When our institutions are taught and accepted for what they are, these fictions can no longer be used to dam up the flow of our ethical impulses, and to make cowards and poltroons of men in our highest places. We shall be free, when that day comes, from the illusion that, because our institutions have been praised, the acts performed through them are necessarily virtuous. We shall realize that institutions are only ways of doing things—that they are a *part* of our natures, but not the whole. We shall see that they are not the deeper motives behind our acts, but only means of carrying these motives into effect.

In view of the events of the summer of 1927, is there not bitter irony in our efforts, through 'Americanization' to teach foreigners the 'genius and spirit of our institutions?' Institutions are never better than the people in whom they exist. Since they form but one segment of our behavior, our other motives may vary independently of them. And if we use them to resolve our inner moral conflicts by allowing our cruelty and selfishness to triumph over our humane ideals, what value have they for ourselves or for others? Ignoble deeds can never be made noble by invoking the sanction of institutional authority; nor can they be excused

---

by that false and terrible euphemism 'the miscarriage of Justice.' True justice can never miscarry, but only those institutional practices of men which conceal motives of an *unjust* nature. Institutions are never noble in themselves. Virtues are not inherited through systems of conducting business and government; with each generation they must be built anew in the characters of our children. The world over, it is wiser to judge institutions by the people than to judge the people by their institutions. For institutions, like gifts, wax poor when givers prove unkind.



---

---

## VII

### THE NATIONALISTIC FALLACY AS A CAUSE OF WAR

---

---

THE PERSISTENCE of wars in modern civilization is a tragic paradox. Comparatively few people want war. Everyone is aware of the unmitigated suffering which it brings, with a final outcome scarcely less devastating to the victor than to the vanquished. War contradicts the ethical foundations of social order and betrays both the fruit and the spirit of art, science, and religion. A zealous array of peace societies is springing up throughout the civilized world; and the genius of our ablest statesmen has been enlisted to contrive institutions which shall supplant armed conflict. Yet wars have continued throughout history, and are occurring today. Between modern democratic countries wars are presumably waged by popular wish and consent. Why do nations as wholes consent to do that which human beings as individuals abhor? If two neighbors sincerely desire to live at peace they will adopt some orderly rule for settling their grievances and will adhere at all costs to the resulting decision. Why cannot human beings as nations do the same? Is there a mind or will of the "Nation" as distinct from individuals? Is such a will anything more than that which is expressed in the behavior of those who compose the nation?

The explanation is sometimes advanced that man has an in-born tendency or instinct to fight which must occasionally be given expression in spite of the ethical ideals which he has evolved as a part of his civilization. This view, in the opinion of many psychologists, is now discredited. Although there are undoubtedly certain pugnacious individuals, there is no good evidence of an instinct to fight merely for the sake of fighting distributed generally throughout the human race. People who fight do so for some reason; for example, for the protection of their families or their property, or to avenge an insult or an injury. Fighting is a struggle against some thwarting of instinctive ravings or of life

needs; it is probably not in itself one of these cravings or needs.

Another seemingly plausible explanation is to the effect that the citizens of one country become so outraged by the unjust acts of those of another country that they sacrifice their ultimate ideal of peace in order to ward off the present peril or insult. The motive to fight is stronger than the desire for peace. This explanation may have been true for certain defensive wars; but it overlooks the motivation of the aggressor and the invader, without which defensive war would not exist. Furthermore, it is not usually actual injury upon a large scale which leads to a declaration of war, but the fear of such injury. It is not because of an insult to himself that the citizen takes up arms, but upon the more indirect experience of an insult to his country. Agencies of propaganda seize upon local and relatively minor episodes and, by arousing numerous expressions of anger and fear, cause the authorities of government to be impressed by the specious appearance of a public opinion in favor of war. War is then declared. While there exists, therefore, a formal justification for the declaration of war, such declaration is the result of the citizens responding, not to the enemy, but to a small group of their own countrymen, the propagandists. Some, again, ascribe war to the unfortunate social system. *Individuals* want peace, but *society* is organized upon a basis of competing national groups. We are, therefore, the prey of the institution of war. This answer, I believe, is on the right track; but it should be restated so as to show more clearly what is implied by a "system" or an "institution." The assumption seems prevalent that an institution is something over and above men and women, controlling them like an external force. There is no proof, however, of such a superior power over the citizens compelling them to fight for their country. The modern military state is simply a phrase to express the fact that the citizens *do* fight as a method of settling international disputes. The system will be abolished as soon as we change the behavior of the individuals; and there is no way of attacking it except through the behavior of the individuals. It is a fallacy, therefore, to think of men in democratic countries as slaves to institutions over which they have no control, unless

we accept the premise that men have no control over themselves.

There seems, then, to be no escape from the paradox of our self-inflicted militarism. It must be admitted as an inconsistency in human methods. We ardently long for peace, and we work for it; but we have certain deeply rooted habits and attitudes which lead us inevitably toward war. At bottom, of course, such apparent inconsistencies in nature usually represent confusions in our own thinking. There must be a way of explaining how human beings could have developed these two conflicting trends.

## II

The central issue engaging the student of militant nationalism is the question, "What is a nation?" Various definitions have been proposed. The nation has been defined as a large group of people having the same racial ancestry together with a homeland and a common language. All these attributes may be challenged and instances cited proving that none of them is essential to the idea of a nation. Upon one fact, however, writers are in fair agreement: namely, that the main criteria of nationality are psychological. There are certain traditions, historical perspectives, and principles possessed in common by the members of every national group which are both the evidence and the substance of their nationality. If an individual shares these ideals with the others of his group, and like the others is loyal to them, he belongs to their nation; otherwise he does not belong to it, even though he may be of the same race as his fellows, speak the same language, and live in the same territory. According to Professor Pillsbury, the best way to tell the nationality of an individual is to ask him.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, individuals belonging to a certain nation are aware that they belong to it and, furthermore, this awareness is an essential part of nationality itself. A loyal citizen regards his compatriots as valuing the same traditions and upholding the same international ideals as he himself does. Not only is he ready himself to fight and perhaps die for his country; but he also feels that the others are willing to make the same sacrifice, and that

---

<sup>1</sup> Pillsbury, W. B., *The Psychology of Nationality and Internationalism*, p. 20.

they will expect and approve his own evidence of loyalty.

Intense community of feeling has an important effect upon our thinking which takes possession of us almost without our realization. Not only do we feel that we are one with the nation, but the nation becomes to us an "over-person" capable itself of feeling and willing. It is a great genius or spirit, to be apostrophized, honored, and protected. That which a citizen feels as more vast and enduring than himself is also felt as greater than any citizen and, therefore, indeed greater than every citizen. Individual Americans have come and gone, but America has lived ever since the early federation of the Thirteen Colonies. Then again, it is more convenient in discussing international affairs to speak of the nation as a unit than to refer to the separate acts and attitudes of millions of men and women. Insidiously there creeps into our phraseology the usage that the nation has a reality of its own quite apart from the individuals who compose it. From speaking it is only a step to reasoning. We tend to think of nations as great over-persons entering into relationship with other nations. We call in question merely the righteousness of their acts; we do not consider the deeper question whether "the nation" (being, in the sense of an actor, merely a figure of speech) can perform any acts at all, and, therefore, who it is who *really does* the acting in question.

To arrive at the heart of the matter we shall place over against this popular metaphysics of the nation a more critical, scientific definition. All usage which treats of the nation as a personal agent we shall regard as pure metaphor. The "Nation" cannot, to human knowledge, sign a treaty, establish a foreign policy, contract indebtedness, declare war, conscript citizens for military duty, or conclude peace. However truly it may have these functions from a working legal standpoint, from a realistic point of view the Nation as a super-individual functionary is a fiction. It is only *individuals* whom we can experience as doing these things. They do them, to be sure, in certain accepted capacities; for example, as representatives of large numbers of other individuals. They do them also "in the name of" the entity called the "Nation." But still it is individuals, and only individuals, whom we see per-

forming political acts. We have no basis for regarding the nation as some mystical force which settles over men and shapes and controls their attitudes. It is a situation rather than a tangible thing. It stands for the point of view from which we see the citizens all behaving in a similar and patriotic manner. We shall refer to the view which regards the nation as an over-person, feeling, speaking, and acting for itself, as the "nationalistic fallacy."

### III

The psychology of nationalism cannot be understood without examining the process by which objects come to be used as emotional symbols. According to a well-known psychological law, any expression of behavior may, under proper conditions, be reproduced later when the individual is confronted by some significant feature of the situation which evoked that behavior originally. The work of the Russian physiologist Pavlov in this field is well known. He first found a way to measure the flow of saliva which occurs in the dog's mouth upon the sight or smell of food. For a number of feedings a bell was then rung or a light flashed each time the food was presented. After this period of "conditioning" it was found that when the bell was rung or the light flashed *without the food* there would be a flow of saliva. The salivary response, in other words, had been extended to an originally indifferent object which happened to have been present in the original situation when the food was given. The functioning of the salivary glands was thus said to have been "conditioned" by the sound or the light. For our purpose it must be remembered that emotions such as fear and anger, and also sentiments and attitudes such as loyalty, obedience, respect, pride, and love are forms of human reaction. They are more complex than the secretion of saliva, but are just as truly functions of our physiological organs of response. The law of conditioned response is found to hold also with such forms of behavior.

This principle helps one to understand how children of succeeding generations can be taught to respond with affection, obedience, and loyalty when confronted by certain objects which are significant in the teaching of patriotism. The elementary feel-

ings, emotions, and attitudes which have already been developed within the family circle can be transferred to the sight or sound of nationalistic symbols, such as the flag, the pictures of presidents, the names of national heroes, the narration of historic episodes, and the singing of the national anthem. Just as the salivary reaction was evoked and transferred to the sound of the bell, so the response of love and respect which the child has heretofore experienced only toward his parents is extended to the national flag or the national anthem. The child's native country is given emotional meaning to him by speaking of it as his "homeland," or in some instances as his "fatherland" or "motherland." Obedience to parental authority becomes, through conditioning, obedience to the "law of the land." To a few objects, such as the Constitution and the story of the Founding Fathers, there are attached that awe and reverence which the child has been taught previously to feel toward holy objects. The older doctrine of divine right of kings is paralleled by the modern sanctity of the President. Nowadays eminent statesmen speak of the voice of "The People" as the voice of God.

Not only are our feelings conditioned through the use of symbols, but our processes of thinking and imagining as well. We not only feel toward such objects; we believe in them. A symbol differs from other objects in that it is always employed to mean, or to stand for, something else; and it is necessary in the situation because that "something" which it represents cannot generally be seen, heard, or touched. If it were not for the symbol, the thing which it stands for could not be made to seem real. There is furthermore a deep-seated tendency to "rationalize" a symbol; that is, to discover some *logical reason* for feeling toward it as we do. We love the flag, therefore, not as a mere fetish, but because it stands for our country. Our powerful battleships and marines excite our enthusiasm not merely as examples of good fighting equipment, but because they represent to us the might of America. Similarly, in the religious field, the communicant of the Anglican Church reveres the sacred elements because they stand in his mind for the spiritual nature of God of which all partake through partaking of them. Thus do we build up a belief in the

reality of the things for which our symbols stand. These "projected" realities are not regarded as the product of our emotions, but as something existing quite apart from us and above us. They are not created by faith; but they themselves create faith in that they are regarded as its justification. Without belief in them all rational support for our attachment to their symbols would be lost. In so far, therefore, as we love and cling to our symbols, we are unwilling to permit any question of the realities for which they stand. The attack upon radicals or questioning pacifists in time of war is thus psychologically akin to the earlier attacks upon religious heretics or atheists. Just as a fundamentalist pictures a Jehovah whom he can love and trust and who demands from him worship and obedience, so a nationalist thinks of the Nation as a great over-person, the epitome of righteousness, and an object of human loyalty and devotion. In both cases the belief is required and enforced as a self-justification for strong emotional habits which since childhood have colored the thinking of these persons.

We can, therefore, appreciate the profound and common tendency to regard the Nation as a transcendent reality, instead of as so many millions of individuals all loyal to a common nation-symbol. 'The man on the street' may, it is true, be led more critically to examine his ideas concerning the nation. When pressed for greater exactness, he will probably say, "Why, of course, in the last analysis I do not mean by America anything more than all the people living in America, together with their possessions and the land itself." Deeper, however, than the logic of verbal statement are the emotional habits which compel one to the presumption of a reality behind one's symbols. Although an individual may protest that he thinks clearly upon this point, his conduct frequently belies him. While he may not in words acknowledge the belief in such an over-person or entity as the nation, yet in times of stress he will be found *to behave as though he believed in such an entity*. And in national affairs, as elsewhere, it is not what we say we believe that is important, but that which our actions indicate.

## IV

But before we show how the thinking and action of citizens are ensnared by the nationalistic fallacy, there is one more thread of motivation which must be unraveled. In his book, *The Behavior of Crowds*, Mr. Everett Dean Martin has pointed out that intense devotion and loyalty to one's group are sometimes subtle methods of being devoted to one's self. Our praise of our group is allowed to pass for altruism without probing into its deeper significance as an indirect form of self-praise. This is because our regard seems to be centered upon our fellows rather than upon ourselves. It is the very fiction of believing in the whole group as an entity apart from separate individuals which renders this form of self-exaltation possible. If there is something ennobling about Freemasonry which is absorbed and expressed by all individual Masons then, by being a Mason, I am exalted. If, however, all the good in Freemasonry is to be found solely in good individual Masons, then my belonging to this group gives me no claim to special merit. Family pride, fraternity feeling, college spirit, the boosting of the local community are phenomena to which the same formula might be applied. Quite conceivably these group enthusiasms may operate to raise the ideals and conduct of the many toward the standard set by the more excellent within each group. But the other side of the group loyalty is also important. Lauding the virtues of family, local, and national heroes probably helps the more obscure citizens to acquire a consciousness that they also partake of these noble and dramatic qualities. It is common to hear children boasting of the superiority of the American soldiers and sailors in recent military campaigns. When a small boy I made it a point to fight in playground battles upon the side of the United States, rather than among those weaklings who were compelled to play the rôle of the opposing power.

Even more important than the feeling of self-elation are the rights and prerogatives which are often claimed in the name of the Nation. There are, of course, high-minded souls who may sincerely think of their nation as a divine agency for promoting



human welfare. But others are animated by unrecognized motives of quite a different sort. Selfish claims are given respectability by making them in the name of one's country, and under the aegis of patriotism. We might, for example, uphold the law preventing land-holding by Orientals in California and the anti-Oriental immigration law upon the ground that without these laws the unity of our national life would be threatened. America must be kept free from contamination by alien influences. To untangle the problems of cultural friction and racial prejudice which enmesh the merits of this issue lies beyond the scope of this essay. Unsettled biological questions regarding racial characteristics and race-mixture lie also beyond our province. We are here merely pointing out that the fine-sounding nationalistic euphemism of "the integrity of the Nation" may cover over, in idealistic language, the bald fact that by keeping out Asiatic competition we may enjoy unhindered the vast territories and resources of the country among ourselves.

The same reasoning may apply to our treatment of the people of smaller American republics and the claim of extra-territorial privileges in weakly defended parts of the globe. Here again, the assumption of special benefits through membership in a certain group (the nation) is possible only so long as we believe in that group as a reality superior to individuals. Reduce the nation to a hundred million concrete and separate persons, and it loses at once that majestic cloak of sovereign right under which these individuals are privileged to enjoy the good things of the world more freely than those to whom a different national label is given. Neither special praise nor special favor can we claim by virtue of our group when the 'eye of justice' sees not the group but only the individuals. And thus we find another reason why human beings desire to believe in that mystical, superior personage, the Nation.

In the preceding paragraphs we have contrasted the popular and the scientific conceptions of the nation. The former accepts uncritically a reality projected behind our national symbols and conveyed to us in the language of metaphor. The Nation is a great Being in which the destinies of individuals are merged and

for the sake of which individual interests must be sacrificed. Careful analysis, on the other hand, formulates the nation as existing solely in the behavior of its individuals. There are fairly clear reasons why the popular view has taken a stronger psychological hold than the scientific: first, because it carries the force of emotional habits conditioned early in childhood by the use of symbols; second, because it affords a socially approved method of raising an individual's estimate of himself; and third, because it is an unrecognized manner of obtaining, under the guise of patriotism, certain special privileges. Although most citizens will probably deny that they personify the nation or believe in its independent existence, there is, it seems, a widespread tendency to behave as though they were animated by this belief. We turn now to the task of verifying this assertion.

## V

Let us project a comparison which, though hypothetical, will be accepted as probable. A sentry on military duty near the border of his country quarrels with a fellow-sentry and is shot and killed. There may be a short notice of the event in the newspapers. The usual investigation will be set on foot, leading to a court-martial and the punishment of the offender. Aside from the military authorities and the immediate relatives of the slain man, no one in the country will feel especially concerned about this matter. There will be no *universal* clamor for the punishment of the one who committed the deed. Consider now another event which, though hypothetical, is in some respects similar to a recent episode on the border between two Balkan countries. We shall suppose that the citizens of the two countries, though not at war, are strongly nationalistic and mutually suspicious. A sentry strays over the line and is shot by a sentry of the opposing force. Immediately 'public opinion' is aroused in the country of the slain soldier. A hasty ultimatum is sent. Then the armies of the offended nationals invade the country of their enemies and begin their work of pillage and destruction. Many people are killed and the lives of hundreds more are placed in jeopardy. In each of the two instances cited one man was slain by another. Each murder was

the result of ill feeling, and each brought the same kind of loss to the relatives and dependents of the victim. What difference of fact exists between these two situations? How can we explain the striking difference in the behavior of the citizens involved?

One might reply that in the first instance everyone could be reasonably certain that the murderer would be brought to trial and punished; whereas in the second case he might go scot-free. But does this fully explain the difference? Why are citizens not equally concerned over the failure to detect and punish many homicides occurring yearly within their own borders? Rich or influential criminals when brought to trial have been able to thwart justice and escape with light punishment or with none at all. Such instances, though they may evoke expressions of indignation, do not arouse citizens to concerted or violent action comparable to a military invasion or a declaration of war.

Turning to an analogous situation nearer home: Why are the people of the United States so stirred by the threat to the lives of American citizens in Mexico, Nicaragua, or China that they must send military expeditions to these countries? "It is the duty of a government," a citizen will reply, "to protect the lives and property of its subjects." This may be true. But why should we be so sensitive to minor and temporary perils abroad, and neglect the constant danger of the citizen who walks the streets of Chicago or New York, where the rate of crime is greater than in so many other parts of the civilized world? Are not American lives at home as valuable as American lives in foreign countries? Who, moreover, is this over-person, the "Government," to whom we metaphorically attach such rights and duties? Is it not really, in a democracy, the people themselves? If so, the obligation of the government to protect citizens is nothing more than the truism that individuals should defend themselves. The notion that it is the duty of a Government to protect its subjects may serve as a euphemism for the fact that by banding together, employing an army, and operating under the symbol "American," we can secure protection individually when we travel abroad. And so men and women find it useful at times to *behave as though* their Government, like their Nation, were a kind of superior personal Being.

It is clear that the psychology of international retribution has other elements beside the mere desire for universal justice. When one of our nationals has been killed abroad it is not a mere man, but an *American*, who has been slain. It is in a sense our flag which has been insulted. The symbols which the loyal citizen has learned from infancy to hold sacred have been profaned by *aliens*. The affront seems deeper and wider in scope than a mere outrage to personal feelings. Through our tendency to project a reality behind our symbols an attack upon the symbolic object becomes an attack upon that for which the symbol stands. The killing of one of our citizens by an alien, or upon foreign soil, is thus not merely a crime against that person, but an insult to our Country and a blow at the sovereignty and honor of our Nation. The offended nationalist thus feels that he has a rational as well as an emotional provocation to anger, and that to uphold the governmental policy of drastic and summary action is not only his natural impulse but his sacred duty.

One of the most potent influences, therefore, in support of war is precisely that fallacy, which in clearer moments many citizens will disclaim; namely, the belief that the nation is something independent of and greater than its individuals. Without this belief it would be hard to stir us to action on behalf of a cause remote from us both in distance and in personal interest. An individual does not feel himself *personally* insulted by an attack upon his countryman abroad. He feels it as an affront to his "national honor." That is to say, he would not feel insulted at all if he did not believe that his "Nation" was somehow belittled in the eyes of the world. Extending this psychological fact now to every individual (for the individual mentioned above was representative of all), we have the curious situation that *no one* in the nation is personally insulted, but *each* is offended on behalf of the Nation. Clearly, if the nation is made up entirely of its individual members, there is no one left to be insulted. The claim, therefore, of an offense against the "honor of the Nation" vanishes into thin air. While *logically* it so vanishes, it remains, however, *psychologically*, retaining its hold upon people's thinking and serving as a powerful incentive in the direction of war.

Just as one accepts the reality of one's own nation through loving its symbols, so one can reify the opposing nation through hating its symbols. The nationalist personifies the "Enemy" just as he personifies his own country. Blame for the grievances leading to war is thus extended to every citizen who bears the label or the symbol of the hostile nation. The war guilt which the Allied nationals have heaped upon "Germany as a Nation" still weighs heavily upon the self-respect, as well as upon the purse, of the German citizens. They cannot feel as individuals that they were responsible for the World War; yet neither are they willing to allow the precious symbol of their country to carry the reproach. Laying aside the nationalistic fallacy, we may ask who *really* is to blame? Clearly, the guilt must fall either upon certain specific individuals upon whom it can be proved, or else the notion of blame will have to be abandoned altogether, and the problem treated upon scientific, rather than upon moral, grounds. I believe that this analysis would lead to a fair solution; but it will probably have little chance of acceptance since, on the one side, the Germans feel that their nation-symbol, though struggling under unjust reproach, is of priceless value, while on the other, the Allied nationals find this symbol a convenient formula upon which to hang the guilt of the war. And with the burden of guilt established the demand for reparations logically follows.

From the standpoint of national honor the international situation precipitating the World War will repay consideration. There was, on the one hand, an outrage to the nationalistic feeling of the Austrians through the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, who, as a scion of royalty, was himself one of their most potent symbols. On the other hand, there was a strong national spirit among the Serbians which caused them to reject the Austrian ultimatum. Though granting most of its stipulations, they could not bring themselves to yield upon certain measures. And these were the demands which were most devastating, not to Serbians as individuals, but to their ideal of the national honor of Serbia. There were, of course, other powerful and unseen factors in the precipitation of the war. We are here merely pointing out the

essential rôle which was played in this tragedy by the emotional power of symbols when combined with a belief in the reality behind the symbol.

For an instructive parallel from history, let us turn to the Crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The motivation of these remarkable episodes was, of course, complex. Monarchs were ambitious to extend their political power; the Pope and the clericals were hungry for wider dominion with spiritual and temporal privileges; traders wanted new commercial opportunities; knight-errants lusted for adventure and for booty. One great appeal, however, touched young and old, high and low, rich and poor alike, giving the movement an air of divine sanction and uniting all the participants of Christendom into one great army. This was the slogan of rescuing the tomb of Christ from the hands of the Infidel. Without such an appeal probably no such movement comparable in scale to the Crusades could have occurred. The power of this incentive lay not merely in the feelings it awakened, but also in the acceptance of that *divine order* made so real to Christians through the symbol of the Holy Sepulchre. Holy wars were not waged through personal feelings over relics; but only when such relics became to the believer the symbol of the living reality of Christ and the Church. Foolish and wasteful romanticism, most of us would call it today. Assuming that the sacred tomb could have been found and identified, what did it matter whether a pile of crumbling Palestine boulders was in the possession of Christians or Mohammedans? Yet we, in the twentieth century, are still acting under the same sort of illusion. We, too, fight for the imagined reality behind the symbol. Scoffing at the fanatical "religious honor" of the Crusaders, we cherish the "national honor" preached by our living demagogues.

Nowhere is the nationalistic fallacy more clearly revealed than in the actual business of launching and conducting a war. When an international dispute arises the precise effect of yielding one country's policy in favor of the other—the effect, that is, upon the *individuals*—is seldom the center of consideration. Our statesmen and publicists speak instead of the "violation of the Country's

rights," "the breaking of national treaties," or "the infringement of the Nation's sovereignty." At every step the negotiating nations are personified and treated as super-individual beings. If the situation "becomes aggravated" the ambassador of each country to the other is recalled, a procedure by which "speaking relations" between the "Nations" are severed. A "state of war" is then declared. This is necessary, because otherwise the nationals of neither country would know how to treat those of the other, nor what treatment they might in turn expect. Thus far it is really only the "Nations" which are at swords' points; the psychology of the individuals lags far behind.

True it is that indignation has swept over the country, a wave of anger aroused by alleged offenses to national honor, or by some other cause; but it is a far cry from this abstract and "public" sort of anger to that personal hatred which is necessary to induce one man to go out and kill another. We acquiesce in the war before we are ready to kill. The officials of the government are thus faced by the task of getting the citizens into a fighting mood; and a campaign of "education" follows in which the national symbols and nationalistic fallacy are played upon to the uttermost. The methods of propaganda used in the World War, exaggerated and based in part upon shameless lies, are now too well known to require more than passing mention. Men trained in our military camps were instructed to plunge their bayonets into straw dummies with the vicious feeling that these targets represented the bodies of German soldiers. Youths brought up to believe in the teachings of Jesus were thus led as individuals to slaughter one another in a war conceived and justified as a struggle between mythical over-personages, the contending Nations.

## VI

Our study of nationalism will not be complete until we have suggested its rôle in coöperation with the more sinister and hidden causes of war. The belief in the reality behind national symbols is sometimes spoken of as the "national will" or "national spirit." While this designation is from one standpoint intelligible, it is to

be remembered that the attitudes making up this 'national spirit' may be used as a tool for the widespread control of popular thinking and action. To reclaim the Sacred Tomb during the Crusades was not merely an expression of the spirit of Christendom; it was also an appeal which could be used by princes, feudal lords, churchmen, and mystics alike in organizing and launching their vast expeditions of forage. Similarly, our ideal of the nation, while it is on the one hand associated with the noblest of human sentiments, is on the other hand an emotional habit through which we fall a prey to the clever manipulations of jingoists.

The leaders in national affairs often are either protagonists or are unconsciously in the grip of that nexus of political ambition and economic profit which is a potent but unseen source of military conflict. What such causes are and how they operate are subjects in crying need of investigation. Various writers have pointed to the investment of foreign capital, pressure exerted by owners of war industries, the professional militarists, and nationalistic *blocs* in various governments. The rise of modern nationalism has certainly accompanied the accumulation of capital, industrial inventions, and the expansion of colonial enterprise. Agents working on behalf of these interests would, we contend, be powerless to lead millions of people into war without such effective psychological aids as sensitiveness to national honor and the belief in the reality behind the national symbols. We are not saying that without the nationalistic fallacy all war would be impossible; but in many cases the support it lends is vital to the hidden interests which are vested in international conflict. It is hard to conceive of any other device by which, in modern times, rulers and publicists could stampede millions of people into a war.

We are now beginning to fathom the tragic paradox to which we referred at the opening of this essay. It is in the very nature of our allegiance to national symbols and the Nation they symbolize that we find the supporting ground of international warfare. Our nationalistic fallacy is adopted unconsciously and is well rationalized under the name of patriotism. Only when we have insight into our fallacies can we challenge and dispel them. It is



for this reason that, while deploring war and sincerely searching for every means to prevent it, we are drawn inevitably into its very clutches.

## VII

The reader may be inclined at this point to raise the following question: "Let us grant the truth of what has been said—does it still follow that we must give up the ideal of our Nation? The notion of America as something great and real is rooted in our very nature. It seems to us the source of much that is worth while in life. The writer has perhaps not fairly distinguished between nationalism and patriotism. After all, it is not the nationalistic fallacy itself which leads to war, but the way in which it is used. We can continue to believe in the Nation while making our national ideal one of promoting human welfare. Our Nation can be one of peace instead of war; or if war is necessary, it will fight only upon the side of right and in the interest of a securer peace. May we not keep our 'Nation' but purge it of all sinister motives?"

Truly, we would reply, there is no harm in the ideal of the nation in itself; but its hold upon citizens is so subtle, and the ultimate sources of propaganda which employ it are so strong yet so invisible that as long as this ideal is uncritically accepted we shall be a prey to the influences which make for armed conflict. If the emotional element in thinking is a partial cause of war, then the solution lies as much in promoting a clearer insight into our emotional habits as in attacking the forces which are trying to induce war directly. If we assert that our nation shall fight only upon the side of right, there is no sure means of judging which side is more right than the other. And all too frequently, as we have pointed out, the cause which *seems* right to us is that through which we can best vindicate the honor of our national ideal. This is precisely the dilemma we are seeking to escape. If, on the other hand, we should insist that we can make our nation one of peace, the answer is that peace, like war, can be created only by individuals; and it is questionable whether peace at all costs will be maintained as long as individuals can be controlled by the emotional belief in a reality behind their na-

tional symbols. The Nation, in other words, will refuse to fight only when the citizens refuse to fight for the Nation.

"But," some may exclaim, "to refuse to fight for the nation is treason and anarchy! It is a blow against the Nation itself." To quote from an utterance of Major General Charles P. Summerall: "As long as men and women cherish honor and liberty they must be prepared to defend them with their lives if need be. When our people are unwilling to pay that price they will have no more war, but they will also have no more country."<sup>2</sup> But it is not the "country" in the nationalist's sense that is worth the price of fighting and killing to preserve, but only the welfare of the individuals in the country. We may substitute for General Summerall's military formula the program of realistically educating nationals all over the world so that they will be unwilling to fight for the honor of a fictitious nation. Individuals, if attacked, would of course still be ready to defend themselves. They would, if necessary, organize for this purpose. Neither fighting nor organizing, however, would be done in the name or defense of a "Nation," but only for the protection of the individuals specifically engaged.

Democratic government cannot realistically be regarded as the voice of a mysterious Being called "The People." It is merely a set of rules and decisions reflecting that which the greater number of citizens desire. If war, as a purely defensive measure, comes as a directly expressed wish of the majority, and independently of any propaganda in the name of the Nation, then a citizen might reasonably regard it as justifiable, or at least expedient, to fight. If, however, a ruler or a group of legislators decide that the "Nation" should go forth and wage war, refusal to fight for the "Nation" personified in their decision would be simply clear thinking—thinking of a type which declines to sacrifice popular government for the sake of a nationalistic fiction. At least one far-seeing statesman has appealed for a Constitutional enactment through which war can be declared only by direct referendum to the people.

In contrast with our progress in natural science, a woeful lag

---

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *The Bulletin* of the Eighty-third Division, U. S. Army, issued at Fort Hayes, Ohio, Nov. 1925; Vol. 4, No. 7.

is evident in our science of social and political organization. Living in an age of world-wide communication and international alignment of opinion, wielding inventions which can be turned to the purpose either of good or of colossal destruction, depending as every citizen does upon the industry and good will of citizens in all parts of the world, we are retaining in our process of government a metaphysical view which has been the rallying ground of local and factional jealousies since the Middle Ages. It is a philosophy which has long sustained ambitious sovereigns and aspirants for power. Even in our religious life we have made better progress. Though preserving a feeling for our religious symbols, we have given up our insistence on prescribing, by the scourge and stake, the reality which may lie behind them. Holy wars and inquisitions are largely a thing of the past. They were possible only when men labored under the assumption of a transcendental order, of which they were the chosen guardians and beneficiaries. In the political realm we are preserving not only the love of our national symbols, but the militant belief in a reality behind them. This supposed reality is a National Being whom we can neither see nor prove; but yet a Being for whom we must fight, killing those we do not hate and wasting our substance upon an empty dream.

---

---

## VIII

### 'NATIONS' THEMSELVES AS SOURCES OF WAR

---

---

IN OUR PRESENT campaign against war the most familiar and respectable program is that of patriotic pacifism. The advocate of such a plan speaks of world peace and loyalty to one's country in one and the same breath. Universal good will he is seeking; but he is no less enamored of this ideal than of another, his nation. He believes in the abolition of war not merely because he is a philanthropist or a Christian, but because he is a true American. He has the vision of his country as a member of an enlightened family of sovereign nations working harmoniously throughout the ages. Since he feels that his country expresses the tradition and breathes the spirit of peace, he looks forward toward this millennium while striving also toward the fulfillment of his country's destiny.

More specifically, a patriot-pacifist has two main trends in his argument, which run as follows: His first proposal is that of a world concert of nations, a plan based upon the familiar precedent of uniting smaller communities into commonwealths, and commonwealths into sovereign, national states. He sees this continual welding of smaller political bodies into larger ones, this process which has occurred in many parts of the world and is still going on, as a natural law of society. It seems to him, therefore, that with sufficient education and political skill, we can combine these larger units, the nations, into one great commonwealth of nations. Attested already by success upon a smaller scale, the advantage of such a scheme would be that we could preserve the present nations as they are, yet bring them into a lasting and harmonious fellowship. Without in the least impairing the independence and sovereign right of nations, we can delegate the settlement of international disputes and perhaps the use of national armaments to a world agency for the maintenance of peace. This superior agency would not interfere with,

or in any vital way alter, the lives of citizens within national boundaries. It would provide merely a legislative body and a judiciary for the problems arising between nations. The second part of our patriot-pacifist's program deals with the subjective aspect, with the changes in our attitude which are necessary in order to bring about such a union of nations. His proposal is the extension of our national allegiance to a world loyalty. Patriotism, the loyalty to one's country, has been generally regarded as one of man's noblest virtues, as a possession too dear ever to be relinquished. But we do not need to give it up, he argues, if only we will redirect it. It must be broadened, purified of its baser elements, and extended to the world at large. Patriot-pacifists thus hope to unite all nations into a world commonwealth, bound together by an enlargement of that love which they still bear toward their own native land.

Well meaning and popular as this formula may be, it seems to me that it is lacking in insight. Far from hastening the cause of universal peace such a program will, in my opinion, delay it. For it conceals beneath fine phrases the true issues of nationalism and national sovereignty. More basic concessions than those which patriot-pacifists offer are necessary before we shall have paid the price of peace.

The cardinal error of this scheme for uniting the sovereign nations of the world lies in its failure to analyze or to comprehend what a nation really is. In a recent book on *The Social Psychology of International Conduct*, Professor George M. Stratton defines a nation as something which, though not apart from the minds of its citizens, is, nevertheless, "quite different from the aggregate of their minds." "It is," says he, "their minds organized in a special way for a special purpose." He compares a nation with a watch, which, if it is to function, must not have its parts lying scattered upon a table, but must be assembled into one perfectly working whole. Professor Stratton, however, does not go far enough with his analogy. For, as he himself says, organization implies some end, some 'special purpose,' for which the elements of the system are assembled. The parts of the watch not only work together; they work so as to tell the

time of day. What, then, is the particular end for which individual citizens are organized into a nation? Shall we say that it is for the purpose of carrying on a common life? This answer is too vague and is not closely applicable to complex modern nations. There have been many groupings throughout history for communal living which by no stretch of the term could have been called national. Another conceivable reason for national organization lies in the unification of a people through common manners, tradition, speech, common leadership, art, literature, and culture generally. The difficulty with this explanation, however, is that there is really not required any definite organization in order to bring about such homogeneity. Psychological and cultural unity are the natural result of people merely living together and transmitting their folkways from one generation to the next. There are, furthermore, many homogeneous cultural groups, carrying on a common life, which are not nations; and there are nations, organized as political states, which comprise peoples of widely diverse culture. Cultural unity, though often fostered by national organization, is not its necessary basis.

A third possible objective of nationhood is that of administrative regulation within the area concerned. A federal state is an autonomous organization through which internal order and security are maintained. There is a constitution, a body of laws, a group of established officials, and a set of civic duties for citizens. There can be no doubt that this administrative function in nations is an activity of the first importance. It renders more definite the notion of a common life, and aids in the unification of ideas, sentiments, and conduct. But still, there have been administrative units smaller than nations, existing prior to and contemporaneously with federated nationalistic states. The thirteen American colonies were fairly autonomous organizations, with their own officials for the regulation of internal affairs, up to the adoption of the Constitution. Yet, these colonies could scarcely have been called nations. An even clearer example is to be found in the internal government of California after its detachment from Mexico and prior to its annexation to the United States. The administrative function, therefore, like all

other things which we see in a nation, seems to fail in giving us a definition, in telling us what a nation really is.

The truth finally emerges that to understand nationhood we must look not only inside a nation, but outside as well. We do not have a nation in the true sense until the individuals are united not only for common living, for culture, and for administration within their boundaries, but also for dealing with individuals outside. And it is in the manner of dealing with individuals outside the group that we find the basic purpose of national organization, the meaning of the nation itself. What then is the manner or the nature of this dealing? There can be found but one clear answer: the purpose for which individuals are organized into a nation lies mainly in the advantage which such an organization gives them in their contest against a common rival. *Nations, in one form or another, are struggle groups.*

There have been many things for which individuals united into nations have striven. With small groups at the beginning of their national history the conflict was often against a superior ruling power, and was waged in order to gain less arduous conditions of living and greater security from irresponsible tyrants. The list of nations which have originated in this manner is long. Some of the great nations of the earth have been formed by coalitions of smaller nations, or of principalities, for the securing of greater protection, prestige, and power for the individuals concerned. Colonial empires, such as those of the British and the French, have grown up as expansions of the boundaries of national groupings to enhance the territorial, economic, or military advantage or the religious interests, of the people in the mother country, and, in the early stages at least, to aid the colonists in defending themselves against surrounding hostile peoples. Among most of the present great powers political independence and an equality of status with other peoples of the earth have long ago been won. But the nationalistic struggle continues. It takes the form now of a new development of certain older devices in the form of economic competition, tariff walls, and the using of the agencies of national government to secure a hold upon foreign markets and raw materials. It is a struggle of

nationals for a higher standard of living, for a place in the sun. But now, as always, the significant purpose for which individuals coöperate as a nation is that of successful competition against the individuals of a rival or a hostile group.

Because of the complexity of our civilization the fact that struggle is the basis of nationhood has become obscured. The concept of one's nation has been carelessly used to cover a wide confusion of different things. At one time it signifies the individuals themselves; at another time their language, sentiments, culture, loyalty, and political aspirations; and in still other contexts it means their representative officials, diplomatic spokesmen, or their military and naval power. Cultural achievements, folkways, and inventions have often developed along national lines. Hence the nation frequently seems to the citizen to represent not merely a coalition for struggle, but an entire, distinctive region of the world's surface and population, a vast body of human beings having needs, interests, manners, customs, and loyalties similar to his own. To others, administrative functions, the federal government, and the voice of citizens in that government seem to be the true essence of the nation. That national groupings are also alignments of millions of people for concerted action *without* their borders is not so usually recognized. This phase of the matter, the ordinary citizen engrossed as he is in his own private business, is willing to leave to his officials. The fact that these officials are, in large part, the same men who administer internal affairs further complicates the idea of the nation, blending together those functions which should be seen as separate.

To most citizens the term signifying our nation probably denotes something more far-reaching than mere organization for struggle. For one thing, it means all the men, women, and children living in a certain region and bearing the name American. But this picture does not really represent the nation which acts when, for example, a country is said to declare war. In this case the 'nation' which acts is not the totality of everybody in it, not the entire citizen with all his thoughts, feelings, and desires, but only certain representative officials backed up by particular law-



abiding attitudes and patriotic feelings of an undetermined number of their followers. The 'nation' which declares war is only partially, and not totally, inclusive of the individuals for which it stands. Another reason against identifying the political concept of nation with the people in it is that such usage fails to explain why, in a certain particular territory and not in another, the people are all banded together so that they can be called by a common name of the nation concerned. If we define the United States as the sum total of United States citizens, we still have the problem of telling what a United States citizen is. Our reasoning is circular.

From another standpoint, the word for his nation will connote to a citizen a system of institutions, and a set of manners, ideals, and standards. Or again, it may signify a voice and position in world affairs, a government recognized at home and abroad. At the sound of the word American there may thus be awakened in us a whole cluster of images, a flood of sentiments, overwhelming yet incapable of being ascribed to any one definite object. The concept of one's nation thus remains in a nebulous state, susceptible of exploitation by demagogues, yet concealing the true purpose for which national organization exists. Through periods of peaceful industry and through teaching concerning our traditions many men and women have come to regard their nation as an objectively accomplished thing, a reality as true and vital as the land they till or the air they breathe. Far from being merely the organized tendencies of individuals for struggle, the nation seems to be a solid and ultimate fact, independent of particular individuals altogether. It is thought of as the moving cause of our patriotism, the object of our most cherished ideals. What we fail to see is that the formula of nationalism is more logical if reversed. Citizens do not struggle *for* the nation, but *through* the nation, as a method of organization, for something which they, as individuals, want. It is not the nation which is evoking the patriot's loyalty; it is his loyalty to group symbols which is calling forth the idea of the nation. To break down this illusion, to disentangle the various values, emotions, and ambitions which are confused within the term nation, to expose the

struggle for self-interest upon which nationalistic loyalty is based—these are avenues which lead toward lasting peace.

## II

Let us begin with the psychology of national boundaries. Aside from marking out areas of land belonging to a certain group, a boundary has the function of inclosing within it a large number of people who can be counted upon to act coöperatively toward certain ends. For example, when crimes occur, the nationals within whose borders they are committed will support their constituted authorities in demanding the right to try the offender in their own tribunals. People within a boundary will coöperate, moreover, in the establishment of armies and navies, in enlistment for war, in policies of immigration, in treaties, in tariff regulations, and in foreign relations generally. Many of the actions in which the individuals within the boundary coöperate are designed for the common defense and the fortifying of the boundary itself. National organization, in modern times, practically always implies definite boundaries; yet it is the very nature of these boundaries to mark off areas within which people will join in conflict against a common enemy.

Let us imagine that I am making a long journey. Without any particular knowledge of my whereabouts, let us suppose that I take my seat on a hilltop and watch the human scene below. Seeing a quiet country-side with men and women like myself who are going peaceably about their work, I have a sense of oneness with the people before me. Let us imagine, however, that some one points out to me a river running at the foot of the hill between me and the plain, and tells me that, beyond this river there is a different country. My sense of unity with these people immediately vanishes. The scene across the river takes on a different aspect. I feel that I am geographically an outsider; but more than that, the river before me makes me seem a stranger, and perhaps an unwelcomed or a suspected stranger to the people of the region. At the moment when I cross I will expect to become subject to tariff restrictions, laws concerning aliens, and other requirements which remind me that I have entered a region where

the inhabitants stand ready to join their interests against the world outside. It is true, as I watch the inhabitants from the hill, that they do not seem to be plotting or striving against me. They are going quietly about their business. Nevertheless the river, in its rôle as a boundary, gives me an inescapable sense of their readiness for concerted struggle. Nations, as groups of people viewed across boundaries, that is, as they are seen in all international relationships, take on an air of potential hostility.

The reader may ask at this point why a boundary cannot mark out a group of people organized for justice and benevolence toward others, rather than for rivalry and conflict. For this to come true the present national alignments of the earth would have to alter to such a degree that we should scarcely recognize them as nations at all. Certain citizens in one country may wish to help citizens in another, and may organize for that purpose. The Red Cross is a shining example. But instead of being connected officially with national governments, such organizations are usually un-national in character; they represent simply the good will of individuals. Tariff barriers, immigration restrictions, territorial disputes, arguments over foreign concessions, the military protection of fellow-nationals and property abroad,—all these things show how far we are at present making self-advantage, rather than universal helpfulness, the cornerstone of national organization. We may recall that a recent decision by a majority of our Supreme Court prescribes that an alien cannot become a citizen of the United States unless he agrees to waive his own right of deciding whether, in case war should be declared, he will bear arms in the nation's defense. If nations are geographical areas for world planning and coöperation, why are their nationals so jealous of preserving or extending their borders? As far as organization for mutual helpfulness is concerned, Canada perhaps might better be within the boundary of the United States than within the British Empire. Or again, certain Balkan countries or certain South American republics, now at sword's points, might well be united under one head. If the primary purpose of the 'United States' were the administering of good will,

what could be the meaning of a definite boundary line between ourselves and the Canadians, or between us and Mexico? Boundaries do not unite people, they divide them. They are not merely an enclosure of those within, but a fence against those without. The patriot who would keep his own enclosure and yet erect a larger one embracing all the nations of the earth is like the farmer who, after fencing in each one of his pastures, proceeds to build another fence around his entire farm.

The practicability of peace through a world concert of nations is often argued from historic example. Since most modern nations have grown up through unions of smaller groups, since the thirteen American colonies combined into the United States of America, why can not the present nations of the earth combine into a larger world commonwealth? There exists, however, between the joining of localities into a nation and the federation of nations into a world union a point of insuperable difference. The thirteen American colonies united chiefly in order to struggle against a common enemy. What would have happened had there been no common enemy is purely a matter of conjecture. But while our thirteen colonies were uniting, other political unions for similar purposes were being formed elsewhere. National coalitions of this sort have had a tendency to keep enlarging, their nationals strengthening themselves by annexing new territory and population. Such growth of organization from local centers proceeds until the expanding periphery of the various circles, which bound the nations as wholes, meet. Then there are likely to arise jealousies, suspicions and open conflict. In joining localities into nations for struggle against their common tyrant we are dealing with motives of individuals which are harmonious. They all work in the same direction. In attempting, however, to unite the nations of the earth we shall have to work with entrenched attitudes of the profoundest antagonism. In a world already entirely allotted to nations no larger coalitions can be made without effacing lines already existing. Nations, however, represent groups of people who are seeking not to efface, but to strengthen or to expand, their boundaries. When two persons are going in the same direction they can join hands and can add many others to their

company. When they are going in opposite directions their meeting can result only in a collision. Like the French and the Germans, or the Chinese and the Japanese, they cannot coalesce, but can only push their boundaries back and forth endlessly in one another's faces. The logic of national boundaries gives the lie to the assumption that some mysterious unifying tendency in the race will some day join the nations of the world. The only way in which we can get all nations moving in the same direction is, as I see it, to become involved in an inter-planetary war.

### III

The patriot-pacifists' second proposal concerns the more subjective aspects of sentiment and emotion. Their argument is that national patriotism can be retained and at the same time extended to the world at large. But here again, their psychology is at fault. The attitude connoted by the word loyalty is itself not sufficiently understood. Though cherished universally as something valuable, it is by its very nature unfitted to stand as an absolute ideal. Loyalty always connotes a selection of values. We cannot be loyal to everything in the world, or even to everything which is good; because different things, even different good things, are sometimes of different natures; and in the vicissitudes of practical life they tend to contradict one another. Loyalty to the Good means in practice adherence to some cause or principle of conduct which we consider good. Such an adherence frequently demands that we must renounce allegiance, or that we must even be hostile, to principles which other persons consider good. Loyalty is particular in character or else it is devoid of meaning. It denotes a willingness to struggle for some cause to which we are devoted against all actual or potential enemies of that cause.

What, then, becomes of our loyalty when we try to extend it to the world at large? What does it mean to show allegiance to humanity as a whole? We can *work* for the whole world; but, in the absence of an attack from a hostile planet, we cannot struggle for it. A feeling of world patriotism would be so general that it would dissolve completely. We should find that, should

we attempt to be loyal to each individual in the world, the aims and interests of one person would so frequently oppose those of another that loyalty to all at the same time would be a sheer impossibility. What we really mean when we speak of loyalty to every one in the world is, of course, that we should try to succor everyone, without preference, to the limit of our power. We mean that we ought to show an equal love and helpfulness toward all, regardless of habitat, race, color, or creed. This I submit, is not loyalty, but altruism. It could never grow out of devotion to the symbols of a nation; it is a fundamentally different attitude.

But a patriot-pacifist, in his national loyalty, is also somehow thinking of altruism. That is how he happened to confuse the two ideals. The soldier who gives his life for the defense of millions of his fellow countrymen whom he has never seen, seems altruistic to say the least. But we have here two psychological facts, and not one. There is both a feeling of altruism and a centering of such a feeling upon one's own people. A national patriot, in other words, is one who is altruistic *toward his fellow nationals*. It is not enough for the individual to be merely helpful to his fellow citizens; he must go further. He must be *more* helpful toward them than toward the citizens of other nations. And in the event of a conflict between his own group and another the only way in which that superior altruism and helpfulness toward his own nation can be shown is by acts of hostility toward the other. Such then is the feeling which a patriot-pacifist would extend to the world at large; such is his method of securing world peace. We are to advance our national altruism into regions where national loyalty forbids us to be altruistic. We are to hate our enemies and to love them too!

Patriot-pacifists are mistaken. There is no more hope in expanded national patriotism than in the dream of a world federation of sovereign nations. Individuals can be united; nations cannot, because it is of their very nature to be separate. The national organizations of the world are as truly a means of conducting warfare as are battleships and machine guns. How can peace be secured by conjuring with the implements of war? Increasing good will between individuals is a reality; increasing

good will between nations is fiction, a contradiction in terms. To enhance the friendship of individuals throughout the world would not be to increase friendships between nations, but to work definitely toward the abolition of nations. War will be eliminated not by enlarging the good will between nations, but by eliminating nationalism. The more good will, the less there will be of nations themselves as organizations through which war can be waged. We must turn for hope to the prospect of a world in which both nations, as we now know them, and national loyalty shall have passed away. I do not mean, of course, that differences of human culture, community bonds, the love of one's native heath, or internal government can, or need be, abandoned. All these values can be retained, and perhaps improved, in a new and nationless world. It is only the mass of images which we have tied together under the name of the Nation which has misled us. These elements of homeland, culture, community, and local government, so vital to our welfare, have not been disentangled in our thinking from the symbols of a nationalistic group organized for struggle with opposing groups. When we shall have thought our way out of this confusion, when we shall have seen the stark meaning of the nation concept as divorced from these other things, we shall renounce all hope of a lasting peace through the union of nations as they are now conceived. The nation as seen from the outside, the sense of aloofness and latent hostility felt by the observer from the hilltop,—this one great barrier must be removed before there can be a true union of all people and a lasting peace upon the earth.

#### IV

If we should relinquish the formula of the national peace-lovers and substitute that of *world* pacifism, what would ultimately take the place of nations? How would human life be affected? No detailed prediction, of course, can be made; but neither could any have been made for nationalism at the beginning of the great nation-building era. We must go ahead now, just as we did then, upon faith. Nationalism having betrayed us, we can only turn back and, profiting from our past experience,

start again upon a new road. Although no definite statement can be made, government in a nationless world would probably be an agency only for making life secure and happy within communities and local areas, not for expressing the sovereign will of a territorial group toward people outside. The observer looking from the hilltop might be aware that before him was a type of life and culture, a system of administration and law, which were somewhat different from his own. But he would envisage no nation confronting him. A river might be the limit of a community or a jurisdiction; but it would not be a boundary, connoting a latent opposition toward individuals on the other side. Instead of sovereign nations there would be, in the new era, only groups of like-minded people living an associative life, enjoying a common culture, observing a set of accepted laws and customs, and supporting common civic leaders. Viewed from within such an area, this type of organization would seem real to us because we should be participating in it. It could not, however, be seen or felt from the outside. Looking beyond our own group we should see no organized groups confronting us. We should find merely people who, like ourselves, were coöperating, not in opposition to those without, but for the common welfare within. Looking abroad we should see individuals only, and not nations. We should see not England, but Englishmen; not Russia, but Russians; not Japan, but only Japanese. And they, in turn, looking at us, would see not the United States, but American men and women. Nations, in other words, would be visible only from the inside.

When national organization and the spectacle of nations as great Persons facing one another shall have ceased to exist, it will be impossible to raise the old ghost of national honor. When there is seen no 'nation' on whose behalf one can become insulted, one can be insulted only in one's own right. The only honor truly worth fighting about will be the personal honor of men and women. There could likewise be no interest in an armament for national war strength, nor any lust for military conquests. Since no nation would have a practical reality outside its own group, there could be no threat by an armed nation just across the border. Treaties



would not be needed. In the absence of national organization no thirst for power or foreign possessions in the name of one's nation could drive a people to hostility against others. Extra-territorial rights, troublesome foreign concessions, and occupations by national marines would be automatically abolished. The vexing war guilt question would be solved, for no individual could be stigmatized in the name of his 'guilty' nation. Nations, as seen across our borders, being considered illusions, no one would trouble to attach blame to them. Only the acts of *individuals* would be judged; and from this standpoint all would probably be found to be about equally guilty, or perhaps only equally tragically mistaken. Reparations, therefore, those sources of future hatred, could never be levied upon a national scale, to the disadvantage of millions of men and women. The burden of war debts, another source of ill will, would be alleviated. By dealing as individual Americans with individual Frenchmen or Englishmen who owe us money we could assess the obligation for the war's cost in a more fair and humane manner. Natural human impulses would be given play between individuals which are lost or buried as between nations. We should no longer seek to enrich and strengthen ourselves under the smug maxim of 'a nation's moral responsibility to pay its debts,' while refusing to see what the realities of such payments mean to the individuals who have to make them. World conferences, in the new order, would be conducted not by the unconciliatory spokesmen of nations, but by discussions between peoples of various economic and cultural areas. Delegates to a world assembly would meet and exchange opinions freely as individuals, not as diplomats authorized and bound to a limited utterance by the voice of the nation which sent them. In a world without externalized nations there would be no tariff problems. Nations invisible from without could never present barriers to the free flow of the products of the world's manufacture and exchange. The shifting credit of 'nations,' the fluctuation of national currency, the collapse of the pound, the mark, or the dollar could no longer shake our economic security and threaten the livelihood of men and women. The present selfishness, which, being largely unconscious, is now justified

in the name of the nation, would find difficulty of expression in a nationless world order. There could be no amassing of comforts, luxury, or power by any one people at the expense of another under the cover of slogans such as 'the national destiny,' 'the national ideal for the home,' 'the national standard of living,' or 'making one's nation a model for others to follow.' All these fictions would crumble and fade, for we should realize that the rights, destinies and ideals of 'nations' are often only rationalizations for special privileges which individuals, nationally organized, are seeking. Our present forbidding barriers to immigration would therefore yield to a more sane and tolerant counsel. Solely upon the basis of their worth as individuals, and not through any label of nation, race, or creed, would men and women be accepted or rejected by the individuals of the communities into which they came. The world would be for the people of the world.

In a world in which no nation has reality from the outside, not only these lesser sources of irritation between groups would be abolished, but that greater spectre, international war. The patriot peace-lovers' formula, at this point has been seductive. War, they argue, is not inherent in nationality. It is simply an archaic, tribal method which nations still preserve for settling their disputes. As humanity progresses nations will ultimately substitute a better and more humane method. But let us not be misled. Notwithstanding thousands of years of altruistic advances, in spite of centuries of Christianity in which men's love and regard for their fellows seem, in other matters, to have been steadily increasing, we still have war. Wars are still numerous, and more terrible than ever before. If we wait for 'nations' to rid us of this curse we may wait forever. To say that war is used as a method of settling disputes is to misread history. War has brought aggravation, rather than peaceful termination to the quarrels of men. Moreover, when military leaders and an aroused populace go to war their thought is not that of settling an argument; it is rather to settle the argument in their own way. It is to get, in other words, what they want. No one supposes that the issue between the Austrians and Serbians over the trial of the Arch-

duke's assassin was the full explanation of the World War. The dispute over treaty obligations, railroads, or foreign investments does not sum up the conflict between the Japanese and the Chinese in Manchuria. One must look beyond these details to growing national feeling and hatred of foreign exploitation in China and to the hard-pressed millions crowded within the islands of Japan. There is involved here no mere dispute between nations. A colossal struggle is brewing, in which millions of people by concerted effort are contending against millions of others in order to get what they want and sorely need. In the face of such grim realities, let us not beguile ourselves by fine words about improving the nations' methods of settling their disputes. War is not a method of settling disputes between nations; war is the dispute itself. It is the character which such a conflict is bound to assume where millions who have pledged to one another as a nation their highest loyalty are put to the supreme test against other millions who have pledged themselves in the same manner. War is the device which nationally organized individuals use when other means have failed. It comes not from the disputes between nations, but from nations themselves. When armed, sovereign nations as modes of human organization shall have ceased, we may hope for the final disappearance of war.

## V

A peace-loving patriot will probably denounce these observations as the rashest folly. It is absurd, he will argue, to think that we can give up the externalized nation; nations must be as real in the form they show to outsiders as in their internal arrangements. It is one of the established principles of political science, he will say, that governments must secure the welfare of their citizens both at home and abroad. Unless a government has the power to defend and perpetuate itself among the other governments of the world, it cannot hope to control its affairs at home. But this objection is based upon the traditional picture, which, unless my prediction fails, may alter markedly in the coming decades. It is conceded that in a world allotted entirely into national boundaries, a threat to the national sovereignty,

independence, and territory of any group naturally menaces the autonomy of the government carried on within the area concerned. If, however, by eliminating territorial nations, we could remove the fear of any group outside one's own, the security of internal government would be practically assured. It is conceivable, of course, that when all boundaries shall have vanished and when all national alignments shall have been discontinued and armaments scrapped, some particular group of upstarts, some recalcitrant, die-hard nationalists, might suddenly decide to go back to the old scheme. Such a group might then organize to take advantage of the absence of other national organizations, hoping by a *coup d'état* to gain power over the entire world. Such an act by a local group would, of course, be unlikely with the consensus of opinion in the rest of the world against them. But should it occur, a temporary coalition of the other peoples of the world would have to be formed for defense and for the maintenance of the new order. Prevailing sentiment would then allow this defensory coalition to lapse as rapidly as the need for it declined. Sovereign nationalism could be abolished, of course, only by world-wide preparation and agreement. Should exceptions of the kind just noted occur in any serious degree, they would indicate that we were not yet ready for this solution. Nevertheless, recognizing and encouraged by lesser degrees of success in our program, we still might work on patiently, step by step, toward its completion.

The speedy abandonment of externalized, sovereign nationhood seems at present inconceivable because of the tremendous capitulation of self-interest which would be required in the more powerful and prosperous countries. Our own land, whose people are probably no more fundamentally selfish than those of other nations, may be taken as an example. Though coming to be recognized as the principal creditor nation of the earth, we have, nevertheless, been pledged to aloofness from foreign concerns. Our superior prosperity has not only failed to cause us humanitarian concern for other peoples, but has been the occasion of our boasting. It has evoked in high places the proud, misguided presumption that we possess, as a people, more rugged virtues and

nobler institutions than other nations. We live, by the accident of birth, in a vast territory of untold wealth given over a few generations ago to a comparative handful of pioneers. We are protected economically by a high tariff, secluded by rigid immigration laws, and fortified by a powerful military and naval establishment. In such a land a deep change of heart and profound enlightenment must take place before nationalism can be given up. Though giving lip service to peace, we still glorify patriotism, cajoling ourselves by the belief that our highly interested love of country can, by a mere extension of the term, become the disinterested love of the world. We clamor for peace, but we are unwilling to pay the price.

And yet, in spite of all this, there is ground for hope. No one who surveys the trend of the times, who sees the growing pressure for reduced armaments which may in time become disarmament, the relinquishment by treaty of the right of nationals to wage offensive war, the moratorium on international war debts looking possibly toward their ultimate cancellation,—no observer who views these happenings can say dogmatically that the abolition of nations themselves, as sovereign forms of organization, may not some day be possible. For nations, after all, consist, so far as human knowledge goes, only in the citizens' habits of banding together and working for their own advantage as against the rest of the world. Hence, as these habits gradually, and in particular matters, become relinquished in favor of a broader tolerance and in the hope of world peace, the nation itself will fade in that proportion from the hearts and thoughts of men.

And now we come to the patriot-pacifists' last defense. Regardless of whether the abandonment of national organization may ever become a practicable solution, many will assert that the *idea* of the nation is so old and so deeply rooted in tradition as to become an inalienable characteristic of the race. Loyalty to one's country, they will maintain, is instinctive; and the purpose and destiny of one's nation are realities so clearly felt that they assume the rôle of a compelling power. But like all the other arguments for a deterministic nationalism, these claims are pure assumptions. The theory of an instinct of patriotism, a national

loyalty born in the race, has no credible foundation. The hand of a 'divine destiny' which we project behind the action of the founding fathers, the alleged historical continuity of purpose which makes the nation seem real as over and above the individuals composing it, cannot be taken seriously today. That confusion of our native heath, our folkways, our community, and our internal government with armed, sovereign nationhood, a confusion which has given to the latter a character of worth and finality which it does not deserve, may be dispelled by a little reflection. All that we need to do is to face, with full insight, our reasons for submitting to illusions such as these. The pain of clear thinking and the acceptance of its consequences are the price of peace.

A sovereign nation is like a modern business corporation. Both are artificial devices which grew up in support of the interests of certain groups of people. Neither is a phenomenon which possesses the permanent character of a natural law. Just as individuals with business interests have set up the legal fiction of a corporation, so greater numbers of individuals, having collective or 'national' interests, have established the 'nation.' If enough people wished to do so they could speedily abolish corporate business enterprise; and similarly, men and women can discard the idea of a national entity whenever they are ready. The nation, one recent writer has declared, is real only as an idea. A corporation would, for all practical purposes, go out of existence if statutes, and the judges interpreting the statutes, failed to treat it as a reality; if they ceased, that is, to grant immunities and privileges to individuals in its name and through the fiction of its personification. Similarly a nation, as a group fiction and a form of organization, can be abolished just as soon as its present members will agree to act as though it did not exist. We do not have to remove mountains nor roll back the sea. It is only necessary to change our habits of speaking, thinking, and acting upon certain matters.

Loyalty to country is not centuries old, as has been alleged. The United States, concretely regarded, does not date back nearly as far as 1789. Nationalism is venerable indeed in tradition;

but tradition as a force, over and above the individuals who keep it going, is pure mythology. If I am controlled by the past beliefs of the race, it is not because some ghostly hand of the dead has seized my mind and steered me along, but because my parents or teachers themselves have accepted the tradition and have voluntarily inculcated it, as a principle of conduct, in me. Nationalism, in any effective sense, is as old only as the oldest living nationalist. If it were not preserved continually in successive generations by teaching, it would, in a very few decades, become a dead language. The nation is not transmitted as parents transmit the germ plasm; it is formed entirely anew in the life of each child to whom we teach it. Upon our own shoulders, therefore, upon men and women living today, and not upon tradition or providential guidance, lie the full consequences of keeping it alive.

---

---

## IX

### THE PATRIOTISM OF THE FUTURE

---

---

How SHALL we strike a balance between patriotism and internationalism in the teaching of children? In the preparations for a conference of eminent delegates assembling in Honolulu from all countries bordering upon the Pacific Ocean this question was scheduled for careful consideration. It is a vexing question. How can we harmonize these two ideals, one of which strives wholeheartedly for the advancement of one's own country, while the other guards with equal concern the interests of all mankind? Traditional patriotism demands the supreme loyalty of an individual to his country's interest. If, in a crisis, he is willing to yield to the demand of another country, such yielding is usually regarded as the abandonment of patriotism. Insisting upon the rights of one's nation, on the other hand, is patriotic; but it defeats internationalism. Just as it is impossible for a man to serve two masters, so the patriot cannot hold as equally binding upon his loyalty the claims both of his country and of the world at large.

The problem cannot be solved by asserting that the demand of one's country is not selfishness, but loyalty to principles which are for the benefit of all mankind. Many Americans believe that patriotism in our country, whenever it has involved us in warfare, has meant fighting not for our own interests, but for international ideals. While there may be some truth in this claim; yet our record, if carefully studied, will appear far from perfect, and the causes of conflict were so involved that much which passed for noble sentiment is hard to disentangle from hidden greed. Few of the causes for which modern wars have been waged have been clear matters of right and wrong, except from the limited view of the patriots upon one side or the other. Upon each side the combatants have used the slogan that they were "fighting for the Right." In emotional stress clear thinking be-



comes confused. Patriotism, however disciplined and enlightened in peace, becomes a false guide in the issues of war.

The error has probably lain in regarding patriotism as an unqualified virtue. It has been held up as the model not only for the feeling but for the thinking of the average citizen. Could we but take the views of all the patriotic nationals in the world at their face value, we should find the world composed of a galaxy of powerful nations each righteous beyond question in its actions and each desirous of no other object than living on terms of just peace and fellowship with all the others. Yet how far is such a view from the facts. The 'nations' which their respective nationals regard as embodiments of justice are continually appearing to disagree and fight among themselves. Citizens, therefore, who are especially interested in promoting world amity look about them to see what is wrong. Patriotism they undoubtedly find; but they also see a sincere desire of all citizens for world peace. What is it, they ask, which brings these peace-loving individuals to swords' points? Is it too much patriotism? This is to many an unwelcomed suggestion. There ought to be some way of striking the balance for which we are searching without relinquishing one of our oldest and most treasured ideals.

There are many who believe that national citizens have not too much patriotism, but the wrong kind. What they doubtless mean is that there are certain noble qualities which ought to be present *in connection with* patriotism. A more exact statement might be that patriotism by itself is neither good nor bad, but becomes so only by the influence of other motives which comprise the character of patriotic persons. It is clear, then, that we are dealing with no simple homogeneous quality. Patriotism must be analyzed into its psychological components. Such a study may teach us that our problem is to be solved not by seeking a balance between traditional patriotism and internationalism, but by revising the attitudes of which the former is composed.

## II

There are two elements or, if one prefers, two kinds of patriotism which, in most people's thinking, seem to have been seldom

clearly distinguished. The first is an inner feeling toward one's country which seeks for no justification beyond itself. National symbols, such as the flag and the national hymn, have from this standpoint deep but wholly personal significance to us. We think of our nation as existing not externally and apart from us, but as a part of our own natures. This feeling is similar to that of the individualist in religion, a person who believes in a God who, like Mr. H. G. Wells' *God the Invisible King*, is immanent rather than transcendent. The experience of both the nation and the deity in this sense is personal and unique. We may imagine that others possess a similar feeling; but we can never prove it, because there is no outer object to which these experiences may be referred. As in the determination of right and wrong, conscience, and ethical feeling, the criterion of patriotism is within the individual himself. A man may truly love his country, and be in this sense patriotic, while refusing to enter a war supported by the majority of citizens of the nation. National allegiance of this sort is entirely subjective.

It is obvious that a patriotism based upon this element alone, while it may produce a common sympathy and understanding, can never serve as a sanction for the control of popular thought and conduct upon a large scale. Each man, of course, is willing to fight for his own principles; but since these inner values cannot be objectified or made identical with the principles of thousands of others, they cannot be used in compelling him to enlist in widespread popular crusades. This, in short, is a patriotism based upon love of country without the potential basis for organized hatred. It is loyalty to country as an ideal inner experience, but not as some great Being existing over and above its individual citizens, a Being to be defended by concerted warlike action.

The other, and perhaps more typical, element in modern patriotism is the projection of the inner experience of one's country as an outer reality. Since one's country is believed to be objective, and over and above the citizens, it is the same for all of them. Not only do we love our country; we believe that it exists as an object of our devotion independently of us and of all individual citizens. It is a *common* object and demands the loyalty of all.

Just as the Christians and Mohammedans of the Middle Ages cherished their religious faiths as transcendental realities to be fought for, so the 'objective' patriot regards his country as a super human entity, claiming his utmost devotion and sacrifice. The Church Militant becomes a model for the Nation Militant. "For God and King" is a slogan combining these two similar emotional attitudes. It is important to recognize the issues involved in the distinction between these two forms of patriotism. The patriot of the personal or subjective type does not ascribe to the country he loves any existence at all, whether for right or for wrong, except as it exists in the lives of those who compose it, and who cherish its symbols and its ideals. Only through the dictates of his own conscience is it able to exert a sovereign control upon him. Subjective patriotism may be used to organize individuals for the expression of common feelings and ideals which, though similar in all and expressed in the same outward fashion, still remain personal. But objective patriotism can go further than this: it can bring about concerted action through power and the sword. Subjective patriotism can be organized only from within. Objective patriotism can be organized from 'above' by the leaders of the nation, whether they be chosen officials, military figures, or demagogues.

The nationalistic attitude of modern times has been born out of the concerted struggles of individuals for political, economic, and religious freedom. The older national alignments of Europe arose from such efforts as the uniting of certain groups of people under a parliament against the feudal barons, or from the joining of neighboring principalities against the members of other coalitions. More recent centuries have witnessed the struggle of men for a national independence in the American colonies, in the South American republics, in the Transvaal, in India, in the Balkan states, in the Philippine Islands and in other portions of the earth. In nearly every instance, however, we find that the strivings of the members of these groups having common cultural backgrounds and common interests have developed or have reinforced in the individuals a profound loyalty to symbols which have stood in their minds for the group as a whole, that is, for their

Nation. The establishment and freedom of his nation meant to the individual a better opportunity for life; and a vigorous, objective patriotism became the emotional accompaniment of his effort for self-determination. There has grown up through the history of national struggles a feeling for one's country as a reality greater than the interests of mere individuals. For maximum coöperation could be attained only when each individual felt that he was fighting not only his own battle, but the battle of the Nation. Objective patriotism thus had its natural beginnings in the historical episodes in which national groupings came into being.

The serious problems of modern nationalism, however, do not center in minority groups whose members are seeking to win a national existence, but in great and strongly established powers. Although the conflicts for freedom which originally evoked national consciousness in these countries have long ago been won, the patriotism which is associated with national symbols has remained. Nationals are still organized as struggle groups; but they are struggling now not for independence, but for 'a place in the sun'; that is, for economic advantage, foreign colonies, trade privileges, new territories, and military supremacy. Unconscious of the change which time has wrought in the human situation, we are preserving as an unqualified virtue the patriotism of a former age. The Nation as an objective entity has become so powerfully established in men's thinking that it is now regarded as something to fight for in itself. For self-defense there has been substituted the idea of national defense, and for personal liberty the doctrine of the 'sovereignty and honor of the Nation.' In such a sequence of events there is comprised a vicious circle; struggle begets nationalism, and nationalism in turn helps to produce further struggle.

This picture will not be difficult for us to accept as an interpretation of nations other than our own. We readily sense its application to the Germany or France of yesterday, the Japan of today, and the China of tomorrow. But it is not so easy to envisage the United States as a great coalition through which, under the banner of a National Being and Destiny, the prosperity and economic privilege of our citizens are steadily maintained.

An objective patriot's conception is cast in more idealistic terms. He pictures our country as a great Republic, born in 1776 out of the prophetic inspiration of guardians divinely appointed, growing in prosperity through its inherent righteousness, sheltering all who come beneath its wings, championing everywhere the cause of freedom, and serving as a model for all the nations of the globe. He teaches his children that this is the meaning of their country not only at home, but throughout the world. Our quarrel, be it understood, is not with the motive which would make the nation an ideal deserving of such a portrait, but with the blindness which prevents us from seeing our patriotism and our national behavior as other nationals see them and, in fact, as they truly are.

Returning then to the question of how we can strike a balance between patriotism and internationalism, I would propose the following solution. Let us revise our patriotism in a fundamental way. Discarding the objective element upon which militarism is based, let us keep only the inner, or subjective, experience of the love of country. Only by laying aside the theory of a national entity, whether conceived in good or in evil terms, can we provide a place for the international ideal. Belief in the outer reality of the institution for which the patriot is willing to fight may be abolished, while the humanitarian element of his patriotism may be retained. Just as 'the divine nature in me' is ultimately a sounder ethical attitude than obedience to laws 'derived from a God in the sky,' so the experience of Americanism as an inner emotion is a working principle superior to the worship of a National Ideal hovering above our heads.

### III

This reduction of the patriotic impulse, as I am well aware, runs counter to established views. Many sincere men and women like to think of righteousness, liberty, and justice not merely as the ideals of individuals, but as the spirit which animates the Nation. To deny too vigorously the reality of this National Spirit will undermine not only militant nationalism but much of patriotism as well. The tradition of our country, wrought in

peace and in war, the sacrifice of those who have struggled for the birth and preservation of our Union and for the founding of our free institutions,—these, it may be protested, are values not lightly to be set aside by the carping critic who would interpose cold logic between them and the national faith which has made them possible. It is not, however, our advances toward human freedom which I would challenge, nor the spirit of those by whose efforts they have been achieved. But the objective patriots' believe in the nation as a Being in which these values inhere is not essential to such a spirit. It is only the doctrine or shell within which, in days of group-struggle and national beginnings, it was possible for a concerted striving to take place. Just as religious motives outgrow their creeds, so civilized men and women outgrow their political doctrines. In championing, therefore, the personal as against the objective aspect of patriotism I am seeking to extend to wider limits the ethical impulses which I believe to have dominated many of the makers of our country's history, and to release them so that they may be expressed in a sphere of world, instead of merely nation-wide, activity.

In fairness, however, to those who hold to a patriotism based upon the super-individual reality of their nation, certain of their leading arguments must be examined. These may be classified under two heads: namely, the argument for protection, and the spiritual and cultural evaluation of nationality. Let us discuss them in order.

In spite of our vast development of commerce and invention, nationalistic patriots would urge, the world is still young. It is true that nations have risen as relatively small struggle groups. But now, though large and powerful, we are still in the struggling period. Resistance against distant tyranny, the Monroe Doctrine, the tradition of isolation from European entanglements are, according to this view, still necessary. Nationals everywhere are so jealous and so hostile to one another that there is no way of maintaining individual life and welfare unless individuals organize and operate under the concept of a Nation. To believe in the reality of such a Nation and to fight for it may be logically questionable; but it is, according to objective patriots, a bio-

logical necessity. Uncritical, objective patriotism is still needed in the world's affairs.

To this I would answer that I am thinking of a plan of changing patriotic attitudes not in this country alone, nor in any one country, but in all the large and powerful nations simultaneously. The plan involves a process of education as well as political reconstruction, and a change not merely of front (though that is implied) but of the deeper orientation of thought and feeling. Admittedly this will be a large undertaking. But it will perhaps not seem so enormous when we reflect that the source of international suspicion lies not wholly in the inalienable greed and antagonism of men, but in part in the type of organization which they have set up and the nationalistic ideology which they have evolved in its support. The attitude expressed in the Treaty of Locarno has done much toward making this clear. In the same way it may be discovered that objective patriotism itself is a cloak under which lurk unseen the agents which would destroy the peace of the world. When individuals begin to realize that their 'Nation' is held up as an entity only when they have something they wish to fight for, this symbol will begin to lose its power as the mode and sanction of militant patriotic action. Objective patriotism will go; while subjective patriotism as the inner, personal, conceptional experience of our cultural ideal may remain. And as the Nation symbol becomes less exalted in the words and actions of its nationals, it will be less feared and hated as a symbol by the nationals of other countries.

Just as it is erroneous to think of the nation as a single Being, so it is illogical to think of sovereignty as the personal and indivisible authority of that Being. The doctrine of unitary sovereignty results from an over-simplification of the political process and a personification of the national group. It harks back to the time when the sovereign was a single person, a despot whose will must be obeyed in every particular. The current conception of the League of Nations, both popularly and officially, is steeped in the metaphor of national sovereignty and the objective patriotism which supports it. This is well shown in the

following remarks quoted from an unofficial address of a delegate upon the Council of the League:

"Watch the operations of the Council of the League. It would be a difficult task to select fourteen men out of the fourteen nations there represented and make of them a council which should have authority to make decisions which would be respected and followed. No fourteen *individuals* could ever assume a position of that kind and successfully operate. But when you see those fourteen around the table, you see more than fourteen individuals. When Sir Austen Chamberlain at the end of the table speaks, draws conclusions, make his decisions, it is not the decision simply of the individual with the monocle and British face; it is Great Britain who sits there in the person of Sir Austen Chamberlain. The decision is not the decision of an individual but the decision of a government and a country. . . . So it is with every representative about the table representing the great powers."<sup>1</sup>

To one accustomed to think in realistic terms this is indeed an amazing statement. We are to believe that each delegate, miraculously endowed with a 'voice of his Nation,' is prepared to state the objectives for which the sovereign power of that Nation must be used or withheld. Consider for a moment the difficulty of a single individual, with his own personal biases, and devoid of reliable information as to the variety or consensus of individuals' opinions throughout his country, attempting to represent the will of his Nation in one unified and concerted utterance. The further question arises whether, on complicated and little understood foreign questions, the citizens of the nation *are* in any substantial agreement. In the absence of surveys of the opinions and interests of their countrymen, the only guides to action for the League delegates are the national traditions and the general policies of government. These form a kind of legalistic philosophy, built up by chief executives and other leaders, without close contact with the people whom they represent. Thus

<sup>1</sup> From an address by Sir George Foster delivered at Syracuse University, April 29, 1927.



an American delegate, should he join such a council, might fall back upon the Monroe Doctrine, the Washingtonian theory of isolation, or the principle of the protectorate for backward or exploited nations. Theories of this sort, which are dicta of our presidents and are seldom derived directly from the people's wishes, become accepted as unalterable traditions. Like all traditions, they are static. Having been announced *a priori* as the 'will of the Nation,' they are not subject to change with the enlightenment or the initiative of individual citizens.

Over against this picture of the present League of Nations let us imagine a league of the future coming into existence as objective patriotism declines and as the symbol of nationalism passes away. Such a body will no longer be a union of sovereign states; it will be a congress of individuals. Sir Austen Chamberlain will not personify Great Britain, but will be merely one of forty millions of persons living on a certain island bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. Though the people of Great Britain may continue to make up what we call a nation, it will not be the 'nation' which will be represented in the league. The term 'nation' will be used only as a convenient territorial grouping of individuals speaking the same language, having a certain homogeneity of culture and interests, and possessing an internal social order and government. And so with the political areas comprising the rest of the world's population. The league, in short, will be an organization, not of nations, but of nationals. It will not be an international body but an '*un-national*' one. The principle determining the judgments of the members of such a league would be the interests of individuals immediately concerned, and not the traditions or the policies of sovereign nations. Disputes across national boundaries would be settled in their relation to the welfare of specific individuals, rather than by arbitrating the demands of ambassadors of national governments, or by invoking the sacred rights and obligations of Nations. Nationalistic ambitions, rivalries, and jealousies, which in international discords render the present League little more than a diplomatic conference, would play no part in the decisions of such a council of the future.

The objective patriot at this point may reply that he desires not so much to uphold the sovereignty of his Nation as to protect families, communities, and local centers of human life. It is true that many wars in the earlier history of national groups were waged literally for the protection of homes; and in some parts of the world this may still be a real issue. Loyalty to one's home, to friends, and to one's community are surely commendable sentiments wherever encountered. A wide difference, however, exists between the stake of our forefathers in defending their homes against the Indians and the objects pursued in modern wars waged with the vast armies of nationally organized populations. The love of modern national symbols is not the love of homefolks or of home. The latter need no symbols through which to capture our affection and enlist our support. The old virtue of patriotism as a defense of the homeland has been rendered obsolete through political organization, commercial expansion, and industrial technology. Local interests and loyalty, love of one's native country-side, home-life, and self-determination, far from being promoted by the patriotism of modern nationalists, are in fact gravely imperiled. It is only when we are free from the menace of war without and from the necessity of enforcing the sovereignty of our nation by armaments abroad that local welfare, under a wisely managed internal government, can flourish within.

#### IV

The second argument of the spokesmen of our traditional patriotism deals with what is called the more spiritual aspects of life. We must have faith, they say, in our country as an ideal reality, because we must uphold our high standard of national life, our culture, and our national principles. America is more than you or I; it is more than any citizen or body of citizens; it is a great and noble Idea. Ours is the sacred, transmitted duty of maintaining its standards, of making America a paradigm for the 'good life,' and of helping other nations to reach the same level. To these aims, for the most part laudable, few would take exception. But why, in order to realize them, must they be made the peculiar motives of a mythical over-person, the Nation? Are

they not, after all, the ideals of actual men and women? What do we mean by Americanism? Our national principles, a loyal citizen will answer; and these may be summed up in the words, justice, universal freedom, brotherhood, and opportunity. We frequently allude with pride to the conditions which we have established to give these ideals expression. But are these principles not, after all, subjective qualities having their being, so far as we can prove, merely in the lives and conduct of individuals who make them their guide? It is only the outer form, or shell, which may be fought for as something outside ourselves, and tentatively won by fighting; the ideal itself is psychological and belongs to individuals. Throughout the world such values are prized and striven for whether in the name of patriotism, or of humanity, or in no name at all except their own. Calling them American has not brought them into existence, nor does it raise or extend their efficiency. On the contrary they are sometimes used, I fear, to give a special sanction and approval to the term America. Children cannot be taught these ideals merely by instilling in them a respect for national symbols as such, any more than ethical conduct can be acquired through the adoration of objects sacred in religion. Many good people who preach objective patriotism unwittingly confuse two cherished ideals which ought to be kept separate, their national loyalty and their altruism. There are also chauvinists who, in times of emotional stress, deliberately exploit this confusion.

A nationalistic patriot usually considers himself the champion not only of American principles, but of American customs and standards of living. Whether or not our methods are better than those of another country, they are, he maintains, *our* methods; and, as such, they should be respected and preserved. So far the argument is legitimate. The cultural argument, however, is generally based upon claims of special achievement in the realms of industry, literature, music, art, and scientific invention. It is asserted by various nationals that in these fields their Nation has made advances of which, as individuals, they may well be proud. Objective patriotism, they say, is justified by the cultural prowess of the Nation.

While at first glance this seems like an honest position, a little reflection will show that it is specious. In the first place this theory allows great numbers of citizens to lay claim to the credit for productions which rightfully belong only to a few. The great products of human art and ingenuity were more truly the work of individuals than of nations. Some qualifications, of course, are needed. Broad, societal conditions were unquestionably present in great eras of cultural progress. The accumulated bodies of art, literature, science, and philosophy which have developed, at least partly, within the national group were the base from which these golden epochs of learning received their start. National patriotism has, moreover, been mingled with other emotions in the inspiration which produced these cultural achievements. But after all, such cultural background, so far as human knowledge goes, is carried only by individuals, is transmitted only by contacts between individuals, and is added to only by the labors of individual artisans and geniuses. Is there, so far as experience can teach us, any National Being which embraces, fosters, and develops culture of this sort? Goethe, Beethoven, Kant, and von Helmholtz were not produced by the German Nation, except in a sense which is hard to extricate from metaphor. It was they, on the other hand, who, together with similar creative geniuses, produced, from the common national heritage of the tools with which they worked, the outstanding cultural achievements of Germany. Their fame is not enhanced by speaking of them as Germans; but the pride of German citizens in their own Nation is increased by naming these masters as its members. Genuine art belongs to humanity; it cannot be bounded by national loyalties. It seems, therefore, that nationals have confused the values of cultural achievement with their nationalistic allegiance. Just as the ethical principles of noble individuals have been used to drape more fittingly the figure of the 'Nation,' so the works of the hands of geniuses have been borrowed to enhance her cultural prowess. No group of nationals can be singled out as peculiarly prone to such self-deception; all, it seems, are guilty. Under such slogans as that of *Kultur* the creative genius of a few great men has become a cloak for the extension of conquest by their

'nation.' And such conquest has proceeded not by the quiet gospel of art, philosophy, and science, but through the howitzer, the air raid, and the submarine.

In the argument which identifies culture with national feeling a further misunderstanding is revealed. Although each nation is described as possessing its own cultural pattern, the real influences which develop geniuses are usually not national, but local. Little communities of artists and philosophers, contacts of scholars and scientists, the surging life of a city or the quiet of the country-side, geographical influences such as life among fjords, lakes, forests, windswept dunes and sea-coasts, great plains, deserts, mountains, and the rugged frontier,—these, rather than the vast political alignment called the Nation, have been the training schools of the world's great men and have provided the content and the inspiration of their art. We have, in America, not so much a distinct national culture as many developing local cultures, each contributing its traditions, its values, and its peculiar charm. A nationalistic pride which feeds itself upon these sources of inspiration does little indeed to create or even to aid them. Just as objective patriotism is nowadays invading rather than protecting the integrity of family living, so, with increasing nationalistic federation, it is obliterating instead of fostering the local community as a sphere for cultural development. We come to the conclusion, therefore, that neither the ideals nor the cultural achievements of men and women can be logically invoked as the justification for an objective, nationalistic patriotism, nor to give sanction to the acts which are committed in the name of the Nation. Standing upon its own merits, our objective patriotism must meet the test of its fitness as a formula for modern civilization. And in this test I believe that it has failed.

## V

To those who accept this conclusion there now remains a difficult problem. Objective patriotism, whether good or evil, has become, both in Europe and in America, almost a part of our flesh and blood. Can a tradition which has stood so long, which has expressed the conviction of so many millions of people, be

deliberately altered? Are we not faced by the likelihood that this sort of patriotism will continue as long as the race exists? It is a mistake, we answer, to regard tradition as a force or principle apart from the attitudes of individuals. A universal change in educational practices, in the teaching of patriotism over a period of a generation, would probably materially alter, and perhaps even abolish, the tradition. But we must have education of a wise sort. Current practice is clearly unfitted; in it we confuse the subjective with the objective love of country and commit hopeless blunders regarding the ideals which we associate with patriotic feeling. Children cannot appreciate the significance of our national holidays, the ceremonies centering about the flag, or the recital of historic exploits with the maturity of feeling which their elders experience in teaching these things. The ideals of liberty, justice, and fraternity are scarcely a part of a child's world in the days when he first hears the stories of our battles and marches with his first toy flag and drum. Just as in religious instruction a young child confuses divinity with the literal words of hymns and the symbols of the church, so the boy of seven understands the ideals of patriotism most readily as the concrete reality of marching, fighting, and conquering. To him, America stands for an unconquerable army and a superb navy. The people of foreign countries represent to him military forces which our armies have conquered, or may in the future conquer. Children of the primary grades seize avidly upon the exploits of national heroes and revel, with all their imaginative capacity, in the feeling of power which they themselves vicariously gain from the experience. All the inadequacies and thwartings of childhood may receive their imaginal compensation in the field of national glory. Perhaps some of our extreme militarists are persons who have made little progress in outgrowing or reconditioning these childish attitudes.

In some countries attempts are being made toward a more enlightened policy of education. Historic calendars issued by a certain peace organization in this country stress the virtues of other nations and place the achievements of their leaders in the same category with our own. This is surely a high-minded endeavor; but is it a sufficiently candid facing of the nationalistic problem?

Can the moral of such instruction compete with the more fascinating tales of American victories which our public-school histories relate, stories which touch upon a more spontaneous childhood ideal and afford a readier image with which a child can identify himself? When presented alongside our traditional political and military history, the emphasis upon the merits of foreign national heroes must leave children of today uninterested or else confused. For to them the United States does not mean merely one of the world's great nations working out her destiny hand in hand with other nations, and striving to understand and to help all the other peoples of the earth. It is more likely that a modern child regards America as *his side* in the great international panorama of past wars and struggles, just as America is his patriotic ideal in the international sports and other rivalries of peace. Suppose that, in our northern schools, the work of Robert E. Lee were to be placed in the same category and described at equal length with that of Lincoln or of Grant. What, then, becomes of the Civil War? What was it all about? A child would see no particular point in having two great men on opposite sides of the battle line, each trying to conquer the other. One must be his hero and the other the villain to be overthrown. He must in some way identify himself in the struggle, otherwise the story of the war (which, after all, he takes in much the same spirit as all his other stories) will have little meaning. Applying the same principle to the World War, if General Pershing and von Hindenburg were both wise and great men, why did they lead their millions of soldiers out to fight *against* one another? Why did they not join their forces *against* some common foe of humanity? Clearly the present teaching of national history as a record of glorious martial achievement is incompatible with the attempt to inspire an equal regard for the traditions and the heroes of other peoples. What is needed is not a confusing addition of foreign heroes to our own calendar, but a fundamental revision of our ideas of heroism.

How then shall we develop in children a reverence for the great names of their country's history? It will not be so easy as in the past; for we must discard the teaching that those patriots were

agents divinely appointed for carrying out the destiny of our Nation. Strong and sincere men and women many of them surely were. As individuals their memory may well inspire our highest regard, though scarcely our reverence. Their far-seeing purpose, however, in founding a country upon the principles which we now ascribe to our objective patriotism has probably been exaggerated. The 'building of the Nation' is probably more of a retrospect created by our historical dramatists than the unfolding of a deliberate plan conceived in the minds of the Founding Fathers. Living their lives with much the same motives as we do today, with the same human virtues and frailties, our forefathers struggled to obtain for all who took the name of 'American citizen' privileges and opportunities equal to those of individuals in other parts of the world. Such advantages have been obtained and perhaps exceeded. This chapter of our history may therefore logically be closed. Nationalistic patriotism may now be treated as a quality or an ideal which belongs to the past. We are now entering upon a new era in which we must break with the older forms of loyalty and with the philosophy of an older social structure. A modern child may be taught to respect our historic figures as one would admire the energy of a man who is threshing grain with the flail or the courage of one who is hewing logs for his home in the wilderness. We admire the fortitude of such a character; we sympathize with the difficulties by which he is beset. But his problems, as well as his methods, belong to a bygone day. His patriotism has little relevance to our modern age.

## VI

If we sum up the changes implied in this revision of our teaching, a somewhat startling picture will result. Our future patriot, if such he could any longer be called, will love and cherish his home, his friends, and his community. Though receptive of influence from all countries, he will, if he chooses, preserve and enjoy his traditional way of living. He will foster science, art, and culture generally wherever he can, whether at home or abroad. He will revere both genius and altruistic principles wherever he sees them without confusing them with his own nation. He will



retain his home ties and his love of his native soil. The name of the region or the country-side in which he was reared, or in which he raised his own family, will awaken in him feelings of profound affection.

On the other hand, he will never act upon the assumption that his 'nation' exists elsewhere than in the lives of specific living individuals. His patriotism will be an inner feeling, something which he cannot communicate or share with others through ceremonies and celebrations. His love for his country will be purely personal and within himself. It will never lead him to fight for his country as an entity greater than the particular individuals concerned. The excellence, and even the honor, of his nation, in so far as these qualities are not to be found in his fellow citizens, will have lost all meaning to him. No special destiny will he claim for his nation, and no ordained rôle as regulator or preceptor of mankind. Since he will have given up the support of a Nation as something outside himself and his fellows, military parades and demonstrations will leave him cold. They will awaken in him only the feeling he would experience upon seeing a marching detachment of police. He will no longer be thrilled to applause by pictures of American warships steaming into some hostile quarter of the globe, or by accounts of American ambassadors presenting to offending governments the word that will make a wise man tremble. No longer will the billboards of his city flash such slogans as "Your Uncle Sam Needs You," or "Tell it to the Marines!"

Such, I hope, will be the patriotism of the future. To some it may appear a flat and colorless patriotism indeed. A militant nationalist would not regard it as patriotism at all. And perhaps it may be best for us to concede that he is right. But let us compare its gains and losses. In adopting it we shall have lost much of the romance of those legends which beguiled our early years. Disillusioned regarding our national ideal, we shall be more critical about confusing it with values such as the love of one's native heath or home, the progress of culture, and the principles of justice and fraternity. Certain ceremonies deeply and widely rooted in sentiment must gradually alter their significance, or

---

perhaps disappear. On the other hand, although our culture and ideals are to be held sharply distinct from any national loyalty, we shall not in any way have impaired these ideals nor threatened their existence. There will be, indeed, a wider scope for their expression. Passing from their stage of fixation upon a purely national level, they will be released for fulfillment in the world at large. Such a liberation will mean a passage from obscurity to insight, from tribal jealousy to brotherhood, from idolatry to essential religion.



**ECONOMIC**



---

---

## X

### OUR INSTITUTIONAL HABITS: ARE THEY PROGRESS OR SLAVERY?

---

---

EVER SINCE, in the dim past, some unrecorded genius invented the wheel, men have been adapting nature to their needs by an accelerating progression of machines. Technological advances, particularly during the last century, have placed in human hands such power that we are filled with awe, not unmixed with apprehension. While marveling at the machine, we are prone, however, to overlook another invention, which, though commonplace today, was nevertheless as epoch-making as the discovery of the wheel. I refer to the human habit of working together toward a common end. Like many of the greatest achievements this invention goes back beyond recorded history. It was worked out in the give and take of primitive living, as men and women sought to adjust themselves in small groups to their natural environment. Unlike mechanical development, this discovery deals not with external, but with psychological, realities; it is established within the nervous and muscular patterns which govern the daily work of mankind. Though more subtle than the machine, it is no less significant; for without it machinery could neither have been constructed nor used.

The working of many hands upon one strategic point of attack was probably not natural for the earliest man, any more than it is common among the lower animals. It implies submission to recognized methods and rules of behavior. Specialization and division of labor are also in some degree presupposed. The value of coöperative effort was perhaps realized in its most primitive form in the capturing of large game, the felling of trees, or the construction of a shelter against the elements. These habits of common labor, with improvements in succeeding generations, were transmitted as a part of the cultural heritage and were quite as important as tools and weapons. Step by step with the develop-

ment of technology there has been a progress of invention in the field of economic organization, until institutional patterns of production and exchange have become as complex, and in many ways, as baffling, as the machines themselves.

While we are wondering at the modern locomotive, the telephone, the harvester, or the metropolitan subway, we should not forget the coöperative habits of millions of people which have made these great contrivances possible. There are not only the manifold skills of the workmen who obtained the raw materials, transported them, and fashioned them into the parts of the completed machine, but also the cunning of a host of inventors and designers. Behind the working habits of this group we find the men who bring together from many sources sufficient capital for the enterprise. This capital in turn could have been accumulated only through habits of confidence, on the part of large numbers of contributors, in the merit and security of coöperative projects. But before such confidence could have become effective as capital there had to be discovered some form in which the goods which individuals had saved could be applied for the purpose of further production. The development of the habits which constitute our money and credit economy was therefore presupposed. There was evolved, furthermore, that complex form of economic and legal behavior known as the business corporation. As a basis for this behavior, in turn, there stands another set of habitual attitudes, namely those of the legal profession, the judges, and the legislators, which give stability to the corporation system. And finally, the power of such officials to stabilize economic pursuits is possible only because the individuals of the great society are habituated politically to accept and follow the rules which they lay down. The construction of a single machine thus ramifies, as a set of common and reciprocal habits, throughout the whole of society. And what is true of the making of the machine is equally true of its use.

So enmeshed are we in this complex of habits that it is difficult to detach ourselves and view the system objectively. Standardized, corporate ways of thinking and behaving have become habitual, and have therefore lapsed for the most part into un-

consciousness. Not realizing that the elements of this system are psychological in character and really lie *within* human beings, we tend to project them as "economic forces" outside ourselves, and to imagine that they are as inevitable in influencing human action as climate and gravitation.

## II

A great deal has been said and written about the machine age. Modern civilization has its protagonists as well as its critics. But both, it seems to me, have laid their emphasis in the wrong place. A shrewd observer may not be so much impressed by modern machinery as by the way in which we work together in using machinery and submit ourselves to habits of uniform and regulated action. An eminent philosopher has recently recounted the evils which modern technology has forced upon mankind. Two of its most serious results, he said, were competitive business enterprise, or production for profits, and modern warfare. It is true that neither of these consequences could be what it is without the development of engines of super-human speed and power. But it is equally certain that they could not exist at all without those widespread habits which we call our economic institutions. If the workers' earlier habits of household industry had not been broken up and newer "factory" habits substituted, the operation of rapid and powerful machinery would have been impossible. Without our attitudes of incorporated financing there could be no great machines to operate, and consequently no mass production, and no aggressive salesmen to force upon the public a standard of competitive consumption. It is useless, therefore, to rail against modern technology unless we are willing also to face the deeper psychological problem. We must envisage ourselves, our most firmly rooted habits, as inseparable parts of the machine system. Or again, in the case of war, we contemplate with horror the possibility of the next world-conflict, with its perfected aerial bombing and its poison gases which will wipe out cities. Yet there is no mysterious fatality about these contrivances. If we were to unlearn our coördinated system of military habits, our nationalistic manner of thinking, and our emotional attitudes regarding patriotism, these engines of destruction



would be as harmless as children's toys. It is foolish to vex ourselves about mechanical contrivances such as battleships and dum dum bullets while we forget our own habits which are as essential to modern warfare as the weapons by which it is waged.

No fair-minded observer can deny that our habits of organized industry have conferred substantial benefits upon human living. They have placed us in a position where most of the drudgery, fatigue, and unpleasantness of work may soon be abolished. Many of the sufferings and terrors of disease are being eliminated and the span of life increased. At the same time new facilities for travel and communication have greatly enriched the experience of many persons. Scientific knowledge of the universe can now become the possession of common men. We have a social organization and machinery which protect us from hazards and provide for our wants even before they arise. Food, clothing, and many of the niceties of life are laid at our doors without our having, personally, to plan or produce them. Through institutional habits we have organized ourselves against the impotent scattering of our efforts, and have made ourselves masters rather than slaves of our physical environment. We ought, in short, to be free.

But *are we*? Has organization really liberated us for complete and happy living? It seems to me that while our economic habits have given us, upon the one hand, the power of subduing our outer environment, they have created, upon the other, new and perplexing difficulties of their own. We still have poverty, unfair distribution of the wealth of industry, hardships due to unemployment, bitter industrial struggles, racial conflicts, and international warfare. There is the monotony of machine labor and the pressure exerted upon all to maintain a rising standard of living; while the possibility of leisure time and the means of profiting by leisure when we have it seem increasingly remote.

In spite of these evils the advocate of our economic order is optimistic. Such conditions are due, he believes, to the lag between our mechanical and commercial genius on the one hand and the discovery of new patterns of collective behavior upon the other. All problems will be solved when we have perfected

the institutions which make up our social structure. It seems to me, however, that the troubles which beset our age are not merely incidental defects which can be eliminated as we harmonize our social arrangements; they are dependent upon the very nature of institutions. In the end we may have to admit that the evils of modern society lie not in our failure to find the right kind of organization but in the fact of organization itself.

This matter can best be understood by comparing two philosophies which, throughout the ages, have competed for human allegiance. The first is the point of view from which one envisages the structure of society as a whole. The coöperative forms of behavior which we have been describing are, from this view, not merely psychological realities but elements in the great societal pattern. They are not institutional habits, but institutions. Not only are they expressed through individuals; they control individuals as if from without. Those who are committed to this theory regard 'economic forces,' supply and demand, labor, capital, legislation, and judicial processes as forces which must be harmonized in order to keep society going. Such persons would concede, of course, that the purpose of these functions is, ultimately, the welfare of human beings. Nevertheless, in their actual plans for the ordering of the social scheme the individual is largely forgotten. It is assumed that a smoothly running society always means efficient and happy individuals.

It is this view which has become the creed of those responsible for building up our business civilization. Great industrial operations, which call for exactly similar and complementary movements nicely adjusted into a single pattern, inevitably draw attention away from the individual to the pattern of activities by which the machines are run. There has thus come into implicit acceptance the old fiction that society is a kind of organism. The individual in a business or an industry is supposed to play a part similar to that of a cell in the so-called "body politic." He is conceived as being surrounded by thousands of other cells all performing a given function which fits in with the functions of other groups of cells combined in other organs. Consciously or unconsciously, our captains of industry have adopted the

working philosophy that men and women serve essentially as units in the super-organism of economic society.

In contrast with the exponent of the social organism and objective institution stands the observer who sees individuals as the fundamental reality. In his eyes consideration must be sought for every living person, with reference to his needs, his interests, his abilities in work and in play, his emotions, and the stresses and conflicts to which he is subjected. Our great industrial, political, and legal systems are, on this view, wholly secondary and devoid of meaning except as a method of individual adjustment. It is not the social but the human organism which is here the primary concern; and it is far from evident that the efficiency of the former will guarantee the welfare of the latter.

An institutionalist is bound to see all individuals as practically alike. For institutions, the organs of the Great Society, can function only when their component cells behave in a uniform and predictable manner. For him the only differences between people which are worth noting are those determined by the fact that some belong to one industrial or professional group, and some to another. An individualist, on the other hand, is interested not in the pigeon holes into which men and women can be classified, but in their strictly personal differences. In his view every human being differs from every other; and the goal is so to arrange the conditions of life as to give these differences their fullest possible expression. In considering a transaction between a merchant and a customer, for example, institutionalists will see certain impersonal, stereotyped responses of buying and selling. The event is material for an economic index or a record of the market. Individualists, however, will ignore the conventional aspects of the encounter and will attend only to those phases in which personality is revealed. Tradesman and purchaser will now be seen to call forth from each other expressions, gestures, and personal touches in the transaction which might occur nowhere else in the world than in the meeting of these two particular individuals. Our individualist is concerned with the entire man. In order to give personality free play, interest, emotion, habit, and nuance of expression must be included in the picture. Our

institutionalist, on the other hand, is concerned merely with a part of the individual, those habits, namely, which keep the 'institutions' running.

A worker in the shoe industry, let us suppose, is given a piece of leather. If the conditions have been set by an institutionalist, we may see the worker, at a given speed of movement, place the leather in a machine, manipulate certain levers, and remove a part of a pair of shoes. This exact process he will repeat indefinitely, or as long as material is placed in his hand. He does not produce an entire shoe; and there is no more variation in the parts he makes than in the movements by which he makes them. The institutionalist who sets the task is willing to neglect that portion of the worker's personality which is not expressed in this performance. The important thing, he reasons, is for society to have shoes; and all the worker's needs will be satisfied by society providing he does his bit at this particular task. Under an individualized scheme, on the other hand, the worker will make all the parts of the shoe and will put them together himself. By virtue of this fact, he may make any one of fifty possible types of shoe; and within each variety there will be minor ways in which his personal touch can be revealed. Furthermore, he may make the shoes today or tomorrow; and he may make them slowly or rapidly as he chooses. Under such a system, or lack of system, the 'social organism' would be precariously and ineffectively shod. But the task itself would be to the worker a form of self-expression, and not merely his articulation within the economic machinery of society.

### III

Before passing judgment upon the respective merits of these two views, let us examine their implications for the business world of today. Modern industrialists, laboring under the conception of a social organism, are obsessed by the desire to make that organism function as efficiently as possible. In order that the machines may be kept going at their maximum output, the human beings who operate them must, in a sense, become a part of the mechanism. Now it is a law of machinery (as it is also of organisms) that there must be economy in every part. No

wheel or lever can be allowed to operate for its own sake; every activity unrelated to the functioning of the whole must be eliminated. But it is obviously impossible to include the entire human organism, with all its interests, in the machinery of economic production. The lives of workers, far from being bound up wholly and indissolubly with the aim of production or with social institutions at large, are endowed with private purposes and with a variety of interests which are often remote from the fields of manufacture and trade. The factory manager must, therefore, select only that limited portion which is directly related to the industry, that is, the movements of the eye and hand and their neural inter-connections. It is as though his aim were to isolate the eye-hand coördinations from the remainder of the organism and set them to operating in a vacuum. It is at this point that the organic theory of society collapses. One cannot make a working organism out of parts of other organisms, because, in the organisms from which the parts are taken no one portion can function in independence of the rest. The eye-hand coördinations are affected not only by every other organ in the worker's body, but by such conditions as family adjustments, rest and fatigue, hurry and leisure, contentment and worry, and by the ideals and ambitions of the worker as a personality. No one activity can be kept going at its maximum in disregard of the remainder of the individual without the eventual breakdown of the individual as a whole. The conditions, therefore, which would render our economic institutions, considered as a social organism, most productive would destroy the health, if not the lives, of the individuals who do the work.

Obvious as these facts may seem, the proneness of industrial managers, under the stress of competition, to ignore them is astonishing. Instead of meeting the flagging of energy of the workers by retarding the wheels of industry, these devotees of the social organism discard the worker and employ continually younger and more vigorous individuals. They have overlooked also the fact that nature has not endowed all persons with the same mental and physical capacity. Ignoring these differences between human beings, the directors of the "social organism"

have set the pace of their machinery at one level only—and that as near the maximum as possible. This policy eliminates from employment those who are in the lower region of the scale and pushes the limit of employable capacity ever farther toward the upper end. As the speed and volume of industrial output increase, the number of workers employed may, therefore, become smaller and smaller. The nearer the institutionalist approaches his goal of a social organism of perfect efficiency the more individuals are cast aside to perish. A point of diminishing returns will probably be reached; but with this selective process enhanced by the continual invention of machinery for replacing workers and further accelerating production, the number of unemployed may reach shocking proportions.

The first to go are those who are below the requirement of speed and energy because of age. In some industries it is already practically impossible for an unemployed person above forty-five or even forty years of age to find employment. There is, as a rule, nothing wrong with these older unemployed. They are normal individuals. In point of maturity of judgment and experience they are in fact superior to many of the younger employees. In a society built upon the welfare of individual life there would be found a place for them as readily as for the youngest and most vigorous. But though organically sound for their own purposes, they are no longer effective as units of the greater "social" organism. Business prosperity is based upon a part of human activity and not the whole. When that part lags behind the requirement the entire individual must be thrown away. Such is the logical outcome of a philosophy which is aimed at the success of institutions rather than at the integrity of individuals.

Another group of victims are those who, while they retain their employment, find the strain of keeping up with production and the conditions of factory employment increasingly hard to endure. For the average worker the loss of industrial employment means his complete failure to function in society and to support those dependent upon him. The only part he can play in the economic system consists of a specialized mechanical task. When he begins to fail at that all his other resources are without avail.

Realization of his lagging energy increases his fear of unemployment, a fear which in turn renders him still less competent. A vicious circle is established, and the strain increases until the worker is actually incapable of filling his place in the factory. In the older days, when some evil threatened, fear and anger were aroused. The physiological effects of these emotions helped the individual to defend himself against his enemies. But in the present case, no matter how intense his feeling, there is no one against whom he can struggle and no refuge toward which he can flee. Instead of coming into personal contest with the forces which have deprived him of his job, he can only ascribe his difficulty to business conditions or to a system over which he has no control. The world has ceased to be a place in which a man can struggle and save himself by his own efforts. The individual is no longer the center of reference. If, through some minor shortcoming, one fails to find a place within the framework of economic institutions one is utterly and irretrievably lost.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV

The contrast between the societal and individual points of view gives new light upon a problem which is basic not only to unemployment but to many other evils of modern business. Let us picture a relationship which might have existed between two primitive men living before money or profits were known. Suppose that a prehistoric craftsman, A, made an agreement with a hunter, B, to manufacture all the weapons, equipment, and clothing which the latter might require, provided that B, in turn, would furnish A with food and shelter adequate to his needs. In this simple arrangement there are no institutions of production and purchase whose adjustment need occasion concern. Each individual is at the same time the factory and the market. Now it is a law of the economy of organisms that in satisfying biological needs neither more nor less work will be done than the supplying of those needs requires. A will not produce *more* goods than B can use because he will have nothing to gain by such a

<sup>1</sup> For the illustration cited in this paragraph, I am indebted to Professor C. H. Judd. See his *Psychology of Social Institutions*, Chapter XIV.

course; his own wants are already provided for. Nor will he become a salesman and seek a wider market for his wares. Other customers could repay him only with extra food and shelter, of which he already possesses enough. On the other hand, A would not produce *too little* for B's use or hoard his product to stimulate a demand. There can be no rise in prices where there is no money in terms of which price can be stated; and besides, A is dealing not with an impersonal "market" with which he can play fast and loose, but with a specific individual who would promptly hold him to his bargain. In this simple, face to face economy, over-production, insecurity of employment, and speculation would be practically impossible.

Turning now to modern economic society, we see a very different picture. The productive unit of this system is, for the most part, not the individual, but the incorporated business. The unit of consumption also is not the individual immediately, but some business of wholesale or retail character. For the face to face meeting of real personalities there has been substituted the indirect action of mythical "corporate" personalities which, by a legal fiction, are imagined to behave like individuals. Such corporations are becoming, through mergers and consolidations, less like human beings every day. They are composed only of segmental business habits; and their purpose, if they have one, is not the satisfaction of the individuals' varied organic needs, but the acceleration of buying and selling and the accumulation of profits. The law of economy of effort which is true for biological organisms, therefore, does not hold for them. There is to human knowledge no corporate "body politic" which can regulate its production according to its needs.

As for individuals, who, of course, are the real movers behind business corporations, they no longer meet their fellow-workers face to face, nor gauge their labor by the amount of production necessary to fulfill their part in the economy of the group. Instead of holding his stock in trade, like the primitive manufacturer, as something to exchange for the product of another, a modern entrepreneur regards it as an opportunity to make money. Individuals do not serve one another directly, but only



through the screen of economic institutions, a cover which, while it shields and fosters "business," also hides the discrepancies between corporate prosperity and individual welfare. A business is no longer an economic activity in the fundamental sense; that is, a means of satisfying human wants through a minimum of effort. It becomes a device for stimulating further wants, an enterprise upon the vast, uncharted sea of potential markets. Of this lust of conquest through business habits, which has replaced the coöperation of men and women as individuals, ruthless competition, struggle for monopoly, overproduction, unemployment, high-pressure selling, and speculation become the inevitable fruits.

There is, I think, little hope of our correcting these tendencies through new forms of legislation and public control. It is even less likely that business men, headed in the direction they are going, can work out their own solution. The difficulty is not in some remediable defect of business institutions but in the nature of institutionalized business itself. It is not merely that our corporations are not properly working as yet; they probably never will work in an adequate sense of the term. For institutions imply, of necessity, a partial rather than a total inclusion of individual life. Business managers have been laboring under the lame analogy of an economic organism, capable, like all organisms, of self-regulation and intelligent self-control. They believe that, if we do not interfere with it, this organism will produce enough to satisfy its needs and no more, and that all the individuals of whom it is composed will be cared for in the process. This belief seems to me to be sheer delusion. The producer or seller does not give his commodity directly as the price of goods or services tendered him by another person. He has, therefore, no check upon the economic production of the individual who finally receives it. He casts his product, instead, upon the market. The circle of production, exchange, and consumption is not completed but is left hanging in the air. An act of manufacture or marketing ramifies into consequences passing far beyond the control of the person who initiated it. When a business man markets his goods he does not receive directly and use a

commodity given in return. An abstract monetary reward intervenes between his production and his consumption, dislocating the latter from the former. Hence in every business transaction it is as though a part rather than the whole of the individual's personality were engaged. Corporate business, in effect, is operated by segments of individuals rather than by individuals as wholes. And in the gap between the individual's giving and his receiving all intelligent control of the process is lost. Economic institutions seem thus to be insensate affairs, incapable of any direction, solicitude, or insight of their own. Our business society is more like a machine than an organism. True to its machine-like character, it has no purpose of its own but can only follow the will of someone who exploits it. Or else, like a locomotive without a driver, it is destined to rumble on, producing for profits rather than for use, until internal failure or the hazards of the road shall bring it to an untimely end.

Because the behavior involved in commerce and industry is a one-sided affair, it tends to run away with the rest of the individual. Business must be stimulated and kept in a flourishing condition—this is the slogan of manufacturers, financiers, and presidential candidates. New markets must be found, consolidations must be made for wider control, new machines must be invented for mass production, and new luxuries manufactured to quicken the purchasing zeal of the public. The new machines throw thousands of men out of work and flood the market with unneeded goods. Salesmen are sent out to persuade people to invest and to spend far beyond the wholesome limit of their energies. A depression follows, and unemployment and suffering increase. Meanwhile speculation enters. We do not ordinarily gamble with our household equipment, our food, or our children—things with which our entire personalities are concerned. In securities and credits, however, we have invested only our economic habits; and we speculate at will upon a market consisting of the buying and selling activities of others. Presently someone shows signs of panic, and the whole structure collapses. It is as though we were walking in our sleep with but a corner of our faculties working. But every now and then there comes a shock as we

awaken to the consciousness of where our business habits have been leading us.

## V

The patterns of stereotyped action which make up our economic institutions not only threaten the integrity and security of an individual but throw him into conflict with his fellow men. The centering of the efforts of many persons upon a single objective brings into play enormous power; and such power may be used as readily for destructive as for wholesome aims. So that their economic activities may be protected, men have organized themselves into groups for concerted struggle. Thus while institutional behavior has made possible an unprecedented material progress, it has also brought forth organized competition between members of rival corporations, between workers and capitalists, between farmers and manufacturers, between sectional and racial factions, and between one nation and another. Our age is one of social conflict; and all our habits of a legal, political, and military behavior have been enlisted in the battle for economic control.

Physical combat, of course, does not in itself depend upon institutions—it is seen among the lower animals—but through institutional habits we have succeeded in making it more far-reaching and terrible than ever before. Modern warfare is waged as though nations, rather than men, were facing one another. As in the case of industry, individuals are disregarded. Except on rare occasions of close fighting a soldier has little direct opportunity either to attack his enemy or to defend himself. He digs a trench to shelter himself from an invisible foe. He sights a gun whose work of destruction he will never see. He launches a torpedo from the compartment of a submarine which resembles a laboratory more nearly than a scene of battle. Meanwhile he waits in agonized suspense for the same lethal engines to be hurled at him. Human beings, the physical and emotional natures of whose ancestors have evolved through personal struggle against a concrete, living foe must fight (even as they work) like emotionless cogs in an invisible machine. It is inevitable under such con-

ditions that the devastation of physical combat should be augmented by the ravages of nervous and mental disease. Shell-shock has taken its place along with the occupational neuroses as a product of modern institutional behavior.

In the meantime we should not neglect the influence of institutionalized warfare upon the moral aspect of civilization. Let us recall, for a moment, the prodigious organization perfected during the World War. What an array of technical disciplines, martial training, economic and transport organization, munition production, and national financing entered into our killing of a single German soldier! In so vast a network of economic and military behavior, involving nearly everyone in the nation, it is natural that individual citizens should accept little responsibility. In every war we feel that it is our Nation which fights, and not ourselves. We seem to be struggling not for the economic interests of individuals, but for the security and the honor of the Nation. Such are the effects of institutional habits when organized under the fiction of a superhuman or corporate society. In order that the Nation may prosper, in order that new markets may be won, and the wheels of industry may spin more rapidly, individuals upon both sides must be ruthlessly sacrificed. We kill so impersonally and under so respectable a slogan that we do not seem to be killing at all. Institutional behavior, through which we have built our magnificent civilization, has also made it possible for men and women who are otherwise moral to engage, without insight, in the most appalling slaughter of which human ingenuity is capable.

## VI

There are a number of social students who explain the perils of institutionalism as the conflict between human nature and culture. The biological individual, they say, has changed very slowly, if at all, since the remote age in which the species first appeared. The changes in cultural civilization, however, have proceeded at an enormous and accelerating pace. Many strains and frictions are therefore bound to occur as we strive to adjust our primeval organisms to the vastly altered social world. So far the diagnosis is undoubtedly correct. But writers of this

school go further. They speak of culture as though its basis were something more than habits, as though it were an order which, though embodied in human behavior, really develops by laws of its own. The most that we can do, according to this theory, is to equalize the development of its different portions so that the frictions resulting from uncoördinated social changes will be as light as possible. In the sphere of industry, for example, culture has been accelerated with regard to labor-saving machinery, but it has lagged behind in the development of institutions through which machine production can be regulated and adapted to the needs of the worker. When these social arrangements shall have been perfected, the problem, according to the cultural determinists, will be solved. Similarly, the methods of conciliation among nations have not kept pace with the elimination of distance through modern communication, the evolution of national military organizations, and the materials of war. The solution lies in overcoming this "cultural lag" by the perfecting of the political machinery of international accord.

To me the doctrine of the cultural determinists seems faulty and misleading. The trouble is not that we have too few institutions but that we have organized our lives so completely in these patterns that we have lost our orientation as individuals. If this is true, the development of more institutions will be a poor solution of the difficulty. The modern industrial era comprises more than the machines; it is also a complex system of economic habits. That is to say, we have *already* developed our institutions of the machine age, institutions without which our present technological order would be impossible. But it is precisely this system of institutional habits which threaten to be our undoing. In order to solve the problem it will be necessary to unlearn and abandon many of our present methods, a course which, in part, may undermine our business civilization itself. This is a more drastic but, I believe, a more fundamental remedy than that which the cultural determinists are proposing. We may overcome cultural lag not only by trying to force men up to the pace of the machines, but by retarding and simplifying the industrial system to meet once more the needs of men. We can bridge the gap between

men and their civilization more intelligently by controlling culture than by allowing our culture completely to control us.

And likewise in the field of international relations. New policies among nations are a doubtful expedient so long as a nationalistic economy holds sway, backed by the threat of armed national sovereignty. The present attempts to abolish war seem to me to be based upon a misconception. It is assumed that aggressive warfare is an atavistic trait of human nature which we hope through education and newly invented institutions to eliminate. It is true that the impulses to loot, to conquer, and to found an empire have actuated certain despots in past ages. Aside from this, however, the struggles of the past have been largely for self-defense. Men have always fought to ward off violence and depredation; and there have been many struggles of members of local groups, old in culture but new in national organization, to wrest their freedom from some political despot. But the mission of such wars is gradually being fulfilled, and ultimately they will probably cease. The motive of physical conquest is also vanishing as kings and emperors are being replaced by democratic governments. The colossal military struggles of today, however, are of a different sort and of a new significance. They are fought not by individuals in direct combat, but through machinery, economic organization, and applied science. With a few exceptions, their participants are not engaged in a contest which is immediately personal and vital to them. Instead of attacking a hated enemy, each person "does his bit" and earns his livelihood through some share in the martial organization, while at the same time fulfilling what he regards as his patriotic duty. Modern wars, in other words, are fought through institutions. The motives behind the World War were not merely those of self-defense, in the sense of securing the essentials of biological existence, but the winning of a place of economic advantage, that is, an access to foreign markets and the control of transportation highways and natural resources. The struggle for political empire has been replaced by conflict for economic supremacy. Obviously we cannot attribute these new causes of war wholly to inherited *human nature*. Our problem deals not so much with an ancient passion

or a pristine evil of the race as with a direct consequence of our own institutional habits. I am not, of course, denying the presence of natural impulses, as old as humanity, which sometimes lead men into battle. But it is doubtful whether such impulses today would carry men to that extreme if they were not given outlet through the nationalistic institutionalism embedded in the habits of the average citizen. We can hardly hope for lasting peace through agreements and councils of nations when nations, as alignments for economic and political advantage, have developed through and for the purpose of war. When we have broken up the notion of these fictitious military organisms into the reality of living individuals—the true citizens of the world—international warfare will be no more. Here, as in the case of industry, cultural maladjustment can be better eliminated if we turn our attention away from the learning of new institutional habits to the unlearning of many which we now possess.

To assume that culture, economic laws, or institutions are things apart from human nature is to run the risk of deceiving ourselves. We have no evidence of any predetermined course of evolution, whether organic or social, and no inkling of any cosmic compulsion for accelerating manufacture and commerce or for inventing machines of destruction. All these things are, so far as human understanding goes, merely acts which we, as individuals, do. We are not enslaved by the machine, but through the institutional habits through which our machine civilization is conducted. There is no reason, however, for believing that these institutions are superhuman forces; they are apparently only ourselves—or rather, a part of ourselves. They are special habits which we have developed for collective and concerted action, segments of behavior which, while they appear to function as portions of the “social” organism, are frequently made to operate without regard for our own biological organisms of which they are really a part. The “business” function is a segment which we regard as crying for more rapid sales and greater production; the whole individual longs for moderation, rest, and freedom from advertising and installment buying. Business habits seem to clamor for new inventions and luxuries to

stimulate and bring passive amusement; the whole individual requires simplicity, direct contact with nature, and active participation. In our urge for production we demand machines to replace men, to stereotype performance, and to lessen costs; the whole individual needs continuous and assured employment, security in his plans for the future, and a personal task in which he can take some interest and pride. Our 'business segment' tends toward expansion of functioning under the protection of an armed nation; the whole individual craves for self-expression within a small, face to face community, remote from the pressure of industrial and political organization. The prosperity of business, the institutional portion of our lives, is running counter, at almost every turn, to the fuller satisfactions of our natures.

The cultural gap, therefore, is not between mankind and a realm of culture; nor is it between man and his institutions considered as objective realities. It lies, rather, within human beings themselves. Economic and cultural determinism of human conduct are, in rigid scientific logic, pure mythology. For a natural scientist, laws or trends are not "forces" which coerce phenomena, but merely careful descriptions of situations as they exist at the time when our investigations are made. Culture and institutions are, as far as human knowledge goes, essentially the habits of individuals; and like any habit, they can be changed or discarded if they no longer serve the organism of which they are a part. Our failure to adjust the machine age to human needs is due, therefore, merely to a lack of insight into ourselves, an indifference to the conflict between our partial behavior as members of institutions and the complete expression of our personalities. The remedy lies not in social engineering and organization, but in the appreciation of the significance of this inner conflict and the determination to restore ourselves, at any cost, to the full integrity of individual life.

## VII

Such counsel, of course, is not intended as an argument for the complete abandonment of social institutions. A procedure of that sort, in the first place, would be impossible. Were we able



by some magic to wipe out all forms of social organization overnight, new forms would probably begin to emerge as soon as waking life was renewed. Institutions, to a certain degree, are primitive agencies for the common life of all intelligent creatures. Habits of coöperative effort, moreover, have brought undeniable blessings and have given us a control over the physical aspects of our environment of which our ancestors could never have dreamed. And there is yet no limit in sight to the technological achievements which may be made possible through the institutional genius of men.

But it is still fair to ask whether, in spite of the apparent civilizing power of institutional habits, there is not here, as in all things, a point of diminishing returns. If human beings are to survive, a rampant institutionalism, in which the entire individual is sacrificed for the economic value of a part, cannot become our final and most comprehensive philosophy. When we view individuals only through the organizations to which they belong, when we gauge and limit their value through the measure of institutions alone, we stifle their self-expression, thwart their needs as organisms, undermine their security and independence, and blind them to the responsibility for their own acts. Such a result may come to pass if the institutionalizing of behavior should continue without limit. It is possible that this stage already has been reached.

In spite of our alleged enlightenment and our control over nature, are we fundamentally any wiser or securer than our forefathers? The terrors of our ancestors were more acute, but they were for the most part short-lived and occasional. The evils which threaten us today are more continually near us, an unremitting source of strain and worry. In pioneer days men feared the hostile savages about them; today we fear our civilized fellows and the contrivances which civilized men have made. Pirates and marauders hold no more terror for us; but we live in apprehension of riots and wars. Although wild beasts have ceased to harass us, automobiles take an increasing toll in life and limb. We no longer face starvation through an inhospitable or a fickle environment; but the stock market is even less reliable than the

soil or climate, and there is the continual threat of depression and unemployment. The anxiety of modern business men lest they be unable to tide over a dull period or meet the competition of continually larger and more powerful organizations is a pitiful spectacle. This fear has infected everyone from the manager down to the office boy. It has placed efficiency experts with stop watches in factories, made agitated machines out of office workers, destroyed the older amenities of commerce, and reduced nearly all who engage in business to a surly and oppressed condition. Turning to the question of hygiene, we find that, while smallpox, typhoid, diphtheria, and other epidemic diseases have practically vanished, the maladies which require rest and mental rather than physical sanitation have not abated and may be increasing. We must endure the nervous strain of working in skyscrapers and roaring factories, and the hurry and congestion of modern urban life. And through it all runs the accelerating pace of living with no assurance as to where the ceaseless struggle for new and grander luxuries is leading us.

In one important respect we are today in worse plight than were our less accomplished ancestors. Their early visions of subduing their environment and directing natural forces to man's benefit were amply justified by the later course of events. And in those days all the human qualities we have prized, the courage, industry, and intelligence of common men, could play their part. Though not yet physically emancipated, men were free, at least, to struggle. They were traveling along the right road toward their goal. But today the entire front of civilization has changed. The problems by which men are faced are no longer primarily those of the natural environment, but of society. The new frontier, in Professor Dewey's phrase, is social rather than physical. The institutional habits which have made our material progress possible have themselves become our principal weakness and source of danger. Yet disregarding the need of examining our own lives, we continue headlong in our construction of machines and organizations to subdue nature. Instead of progressing, we are now traveling in circles, each material advancement leading only to a new social peril. We are upon the wrong track. Nor

can the hardy virtues of an earlier day assist us. Integrity, fortitude, ingenuity, and pride in achievement—such traits today have little meaning for biological or social adjustment. A world of institutional habits and machines offers no vantage point for human personality. Individuals have lost their freedom even to struggle. In trying to place man, as a race, in ascendance over nature we have subjugated men. This is a paradox for which I can find no answer.

But it is my faith that men and women, either through bitter disappointment or through catastrophe, will some day turn to a reconsideration of their manner of living. They will question whether that control over nature is worth while which is gained through the loss of control over themselves. They will ask for a better guide than a system which, in building a colossal civilization, carries with it the power of thwarting and destroying life. In that day we may turn once more to the philosophy of the individual—not the present individualism of the entrepreneur, which is merely a license to exploit our business practices, but the ideal of self-realization for every human being. Institutions, no longer invoked as from above, will then be seen for what they are, the habits of men and women. The goal of a 'great organic Society,' whose members are but parts of human beings, will be rejected as a grim and monstrous illusion. The well-being of individuals will become the ultimate standard of life.

---

---

## XI

### CORPORATE AGENCY—A FICTION OR A FALLACY?

---

---

FOR A LONG TIME I had been a subscriber to the *Daily Herald-Dispatch*. One month, however, I inadvertently allowed my subscription to lapse. After a week or ten days, during which I wondered vaguely what had happened to my newspaper, there came a letter from the company's office. "*The Herald-Dispatch*," it read, "regards the loss of a subscriber as the loss of a friend. . . ."

This was news to me. All these years I had been enjoying the good will of one of the largest, most conservative, and most efficient news organizations in the country, and had never even known it. Had it not been for the merest accident of my forgetfulness, I might never have discovered it at all. But further questions pressed themselves upon me. Who *was* this unknown object of my friendship who signed himself 'The Herald-Dispatch'? It could not be the president nor any of the vice-presidents of the company, for I did not know these gentlemen. I could scarcely recall, in fact, as much as a speaking acquaintance with a single member or employee of that organization. I had often tried to imagine this great newspaper plant in the heart of our metropolis. I could picture a huge building with hundreds of offices and perhaps thousands of workers who were busily clicking telegraph keys, typewriting, scanning proof, blue-pencilling, tending enormous presses, driving delivery trucks, or scurrying out into all parts of the country for the latest news. Yet not one of these individuals did I personally know; not one of them knew me. Not one, perhaps, had ever heard of me. I might die tomorrow, and no wreath, no word of solace for my family, would come from any of them to my door. Still, here was this great 'organization' writing me, in the name of friendship, a request that our mutual relationships be continued.

At about the time when I was reading this missive another was probably being received by someone else, containing a message of a different character. This second letter, let us suppose (for such communications are common enough in these troubled times), is from a 'steel company' to one of its employees. The worker in question, who probably knows only one particular trade in the steel-mill industry, has for years been plodding along for this concern upon a wage just sufficient to keep him and his family alive and to pay the rent for their little home. His letter, which he finds in his pay envelope, reads as follows:

Owing to the marked decline in its business accompanying the general depression, the Company sincerely regrets that, after today, it will have no further need of your services.

By this communication, also, the reader is moved to sober reflection. Who is it that is sending the worker this bad news with a note of personal regret? It cannot be the foreman or the clerk who put the letter in the envelope. These may be his friends and may be deeply sorry at his being laid off; but they neither wrote the letter nor had anything to do with its being written. It was dictated somewhere in the higher offices, perhaps by the president himself. But how could the president of the company, or any of the directors or shareholders, have been sorry for this particular workman's dismissal, when they probably did not even know him? They are, of course, troubled in a general way that there must be so little employment and so much hardship among the employees in their industry and elsewhere. But the letter in question was directed to this particular worker and seemed to convey to him a note of personal concern. Suppose that the worker, thinking that the company must be in some way identified with its president, has been able to gain admittance to that gentleman's office and is now facing him with the intention of reasoning the matter out. He calls attention, in the course of the interview, to his long record of faithful work, to his unfailing promptness and his efficiency; and he promises to redouble his efforts for the company if they will retain him. What is the result? The president this time expresses his *personal* regret; but he protests that his

hands are tied by the company's interests. Business conditions as a whole, he asserts, are responsible. The organization must discharge its men and cut its payroll costs or face receivership. Everyone in the situation is sorry. The foreman, the department supervisor, the president, the directors, even the stockholders scattered over the country,—are all deeply concerned about this worker and his family who must face the winter without employment; but there is nothing any of them can do about it.

The worker leaves the president's office more bewildered than when he entered. All this talk about company action has fallen upon his ears like a strange mythology. In the letter it was the president (incognito) who acted, and the 'company' who sent its regrets; now it is the 'company' who is blamed for the action, and the president who comes forward, in person, with his commiserations. Who then *is* responsible? The company, we say, is *compelled* to discharge its men. Who, or what, compels it? If it is not individuals, but business as a whole, which has brought about the predicament, then what have business men been doing while this was going on? If it is really true that every member of the company regrets the action which the 'company' is taking, then why don't they all get together and prevent the 'company' from taking it? Who *is* the 'company,' anyway?

## II

To unravel that tangle of events through which a corporation is supposed to act is an intricate and confusing problem. Most persons are more interested in getting corporations to work profitably than they are in seeing how they do it. So long as we are occupied with clipping coupons, we neglect, in fact we dislike, any display of curiosity about what the individuals of the corporation are doing. The fiction of a business organization which has a corporate personality and a will of its own, being adequate for our lawmakers and judges, is deemed sufficient for us. If, however, we are searching for tangible realities, if we are asking not what a corporation *does* but what it *is*, we soon reject this theory of a super-human agent. We conclude that when a corporation is said to do something, it is really the individuals who act. But we must

now ask: What are the individuals doing? And here the case is not so simple.

Let us take, for example, the statement that 'a corporation pays its debts.' The only agents here revealed to human senses are, of course, actual men and women. But when we study this situation, strangely enough, we do not discover a single person whose act looks in the least like the paying of a debt. We find that one individual is examining certain evidences, or vouchers, of past transactions. Another is placing, or has placed, in a certain building called a bank, a sum of money or certain papers commanding credit, causing thereby an entry of deposit to be made in the bank ledgers under the corporation's name. Another person is writing words denoting a sum of money on pieces of paper called checks. Still another signs these papers, annexing to his name the phrase or symbol representing the corporation. And finally, a still different individual puts the checks and vouchers into envelopes, inscribes addresses on them and drops them in a mail box. Each person is doing only certain routine and prescribed, clerical duties. None of them can rightly be said to be performing a complete act of paying an obligation. If you ask one of them the basic reason why he is doing what he does, he will probably reply that it is in order to earn his salary. Neither in concrete act nor in fundamental motive is there any sign whatsoever of individuals paying a debt.

For those who still cling to the belief that the individuals are paying debts, a further question arises: Whose debts are they paying? The members of the corporation do not owe these obligations. They are probably acting under laws which relieve not only employees, but stock-holders (with certain exceptions) of personal liability for the obligations of the corporation. Can we say, then, that the *corporation* owes the debts which the individuals are paying? This is not tenable either. Money is not owed unless some goods or services are rendered at the request and for the benefit of another. Who has placed the orders or requested the services for which the corporation is now said to owe? Clearly, this could have been done only by individuals. We have no evidence of a corporate Being who receives goods or services,

or who enjoys the profits flowing from their use. Since individuals receive and use these considerations, individuals therefore are the only beings who can logically owe for them. But, as we have seen, the individuals concerned in the act do *not* owe the 'debts' which they are paying. Now in strict logic, a debt which is owed by a being who has not been proved to exist, is, for practical purposes, the same as no debt at all. Yet in our attempt to give reason to a palpable absurdity, we have by a legal convention projected the obligations upon a *fictitious* person whom we call the Corporation.

Here is a strange situation indeed. No one pays a debt; no debt, in fact, is owed; and yet a debt is paid. Money changes hands or credit is transferred. Somebody is reimbursed for something done in the past. To the creditor who receives the money the result is just as vital and tangible as though a living individual debtor had paid him. In fact, in order to understand the affair at all he must formulate it in personal terms. He therefore says that it *was* a person who paid him; not a person of flesh and blood, but a fictitious, or corporate, person.

To take an analogous instance, let us imagine that, after a summer's drouth, a bolt of lightning strikes a clump of hay in a farmyard. The hay, which is piled near a barn, catches fire. The adjacent buildings are burned and considerable loss results. Where shall we look for the cause of this event? The fire cannot be attributed to the lightning alone. It was due partly to the drouth which had rendered the hay readily inflammable and partly also to the proximity of the hay to the farm buildings. Yet without the lightning the conflagration probably would not have occurred. The explanation lies in no single element, but in the way in which the various elements acted together, in other words, in the entire situation. Now since this relation of the elements or their manner of acting together is not itself a natural object, an agent, or a personality, we can ascribe the disaster to no single causal agency. Speaking in figurative, human terms, we say that we can assign no responsibility. It was a pure accident. We may, of course, preserve the illusion of a definite cause and responsibility by invoking, as we do with corporations, a super-



individual agent. Officials of insurance companies, for example, might speak of such an event as an 'act of God.'

There are, of course, certain key individuals, for example, the managing directors, whose motives are much nearer to that ascribed to the corporate personality than are the motives of others. Such men often speak of what the corporation does as though it were what they are themselves doing. Let us consider, for example, the activities in a shoe factory. The president of the company may say that during the last year he has made so many thousand pairs of shoes. Actually, of course, he has made none. He has not even made any of the parts of a shoe. Still, he is so important an agent in the control of the process that we naturally place a large share of the responsibility for the company's production upon him. Let us not forget, however, the workman at the machine, the clerk in the warehouse, the bookkeeper in the office, and the stockholder who is absent altogether from the scene. These persons are agents as necessary to the making of a shoe as the manager himself. All elements in the situation must be considered. But if the manager sitting in his office does not make a shoe, neither does the warehouse man nor the bookkeeper. Even the worker, who is continually stamping out a sole or sewing on a button cannot be said to be a 'shoe-maker.' He may never even see a shoe which has been completed in the factory where he works. The 'corporate motive,' the will to make the shoes, is provided by others rather than by himself. He does his little part at his machine simply in order to gain a living wage. The final results of his conduct are not products of his own choosing; they have passed beyond his control. And yet without the part which he or his comrades perform no shoes would be made. We come then to a startling conclusion: shoes are made by the thousands, but no one makes them. They are the result of an entire situation, a complex pattern of partial acts and of entangled, sometimes hidden, motives.

### III

The president of a large university has made an assertion to the effect that the limited liability corporation is one of the most

significant inventions of modern times. The legal fiction under which incorporated business operates has proved, to be sure, a convenient device for capitalizing scientific discoveries and applying them to the ends of material progress. So accustomed are we to the corporate mode of working that we can scarcely imagine any other way in which these results could have been accomplished. When we turn, however, from the recognized objectives of corporate action to the nature of corporate activity itself, our doubts concerning its beneficent character begin to arise.

Let us take, for example, the chain store movement. The purpose stated in the charters of these companies is, of course, the making of profits. Every individual, from the general manager down through the district supervisors and local dealers to the clerks, has his task which has been devised to contribute toward this end. It is not necessary that every employee should always have this profit-making motive of the corporation dominant in his mind. Each one simply does his task, obeying carefully the rules of the company, with the personal motive of holding his job and of maintaining or enhancing his standard of living. Though differing in character, all of these tasks work together in such a way that there results a reduction of costs, a wide expansion of sales, and a maximum return in net profits. That the system has worked, and has in fact conferred a benefit through the lowering of prices, is proven by the popularity of chain stores and by the ability of their managers to corner a large and increasing proportion of the business. The purpose for which these corporations were organized is being speedily accomplished.

There are, however, certain consequences of chain stores which were probably not foreseen by their promoters. The possibility, for example, of people in small localities continuing with their accustomed community life is being rapidly undermined. The profits of the local trade do not remain in the neighborhood or village, but go to distant centers of capitalization and control. Economically the transactions within the community tend to become a mere adjunct of the interest of shareholders in other parts of the country. Basing their methods upon the sharpest of competition, the very success of these enterprises lies in driving un-

organized individual competitors from the field. Local merchants conduct a losing fight against them and are frequently ruined. Trade, moreover, tends to become a purely impersonal affair. Whereas *individual* good will and confidence, and a sense of the value of a particular merchant's personality previously entered into retail transactions, merchandising in chain store towns now tends to become a matter of the reputation of the company, and of a close figuring of dollars and cents. The personal human element is made subservient to the aim of acquiring new customers and expanding the company's business. In the field of personality and human relationships chain stores are a liability to those who see a value in the life which has grown up in local communities.

Since the officials in control are far away, since they have perhaps never even visited the region in question, they are unlikely to feel much compunction about these matters. Their interest lies in the balance sheet of the corporation. It goes without saying that they do not directly will these results of their methods in local community life. They may even regret their occurrence. Because these effects, however, are not produced directly by their own acts, but are the result of a complex pattern involving the behavior of hundreds or of thousands, the officials feel little personal responsibility for them. Neither clerk, manager, district supervisor, president, nor stockholder has intended to jeopardize the traditional and cherished relationships of the community. It seems that no one has a conscious animus against a particular local merchant, or an intent to drive him from his lifelong vocation. Nevertheless, acts which tend to eliminate community living are done; and traditional, independent grocers go out of business. Like the farmyard conflagration, these events occur without any one definitely willing them, without any clearly assignable or responsible cause. And yet they are as genuine and, to many, as deplorable as if they had been done by some deliberate agent upon whom we could lay our hands.

In the automobile industry, to take another example, the duties of each member on a commercial staff are usually worked out in keeping with a program of increasing sales. The expansion of

business as such is not, of course, the basic motive of the individuals concerned; it is merely the formula through which they work. Through their part in this program they draw their salaries, support their families, and aspire to greater personal wealth or influence. But in order to satisfy this 'corporate' motive of continually increasing business, enormous pressure must be applied to induce people everywhere to buy. Without anyone assuming a personal responsibility in the matter, the market is exploited to its utmost extent. People who resist on the ground that they cannot afford to own automobiles are prevailed upon through installment plans and other devices of salesmen. Large quotas of cars are forced upon local dealers, who, in turn, are obliged to resort to heroic measures in order to get rid of them. Over-production is likely to result. In the present serious economic depression the wide-spread corporate exploitation of markets without individual responsibility has probably been no small factor. Here again we have a series of unfortunate social consequences, yet no one individual can be found who purposefully and deliberately brings them about. Surely no one desires universal depression and unemployment; least of all, the business men. But because the consequences of their acts have passed beyond their control as individuals, events follow which no one of them can forestall.

In industries concerned with the production of basic commodities like coal and iron, the consequences of incorporated profit-making, as visited upon the workers, are often serious. These effects are enhanced by the remoteness of the seat of these industries from the view of citizens generally and by their ownership by a body of absentee shareholders. In order that the 'corporation' may succeed, the miners are often prevented from exerting any organized and effective action. Wages and hours of labor are controlled as strictly as possible through company policy. The free flow of labor is impeded by isolation and by the lack of means of transportation. Workers are often made dependent upon their employers not only for their wages, but for their opportunity of spending them. In some instances a worker's food, his housing, his churches, his schools, and his medical care

can be secured only through company channels. A system of virtual peonage results from which there seems to be no escape except by violence; and here, the judges being generally upon the side of the owners, the attempt at redress by physical means usually inflicts still deeper penalties upon the workers.

Now these abuses result not so much from the callous desire to exploit one's fellow men, as from the fact that certain individuals have banded themselves together as a corporation for profit. No definite, single person does these acts; they are the result of individuals acting under the legalized policy of a 'corporation' which, being run without deviation according to the strictest business principles, could not be expected to do otherwise. Company-owned residences and grocery stores for employees, company hospitals, and churches supported by company funds are not established for the purpose of exploiting or enslaving the miner, or of robbing him of reliance upon himself. These results are merely incidents, or shall we say, accidents, of a sagacious policy of controlling, in a precarious industry, one of the elements most vital to a 'corporation's' existence, namely, the cost of labor. It is not the absentee shareholder in person, nor even the local company agent, who evicts the striking miner who falls behind in his rent. An evicted worker merely submits to the order of a sheriff or someone vested with legal authority, who acts according to 'due process' in enforcing the rights which lawmakers have conferred upon a fictitious, corporate person. Strikers are evicted, or otherwise forced into submission; yet no individual, acting in a personal capacity, can be found who does these things to them. Many of the leading stockholders in these companies are men of wide influence. Some have risen to high offices and possess long records of public service. Yet even such as these feel themselves to be identified with their corporation only in the matter of receiving profits. They hold the manager responsible that the corporation shall pay them dividends; but they close their eyes to what the manager, acting under the guise of the corporation, is doing in order that dividends shall be forthcoming. They place the entire ethical responsibility upon a subordinate without abating in any way his profit-

making obligation. The officials on the ground therefore promptly resort to the same evasion as that used by their absentee masters: they bow down before the corporate person. Far from regarding themselves as inhuman in controlling the workers, they feel that they are fulfilling a higher duty of loyalty to the company. Since the corporation is believed to act through them, they consider that the corporation, and not they themselves, is responsible. They have become dulled and insensitive through the opiate of the corporate fiction. Not only leaders in the financial world, but high officers of our government, men who are themselves supposed to be the molders of public opinion, can be scarcely aroused when injustices to their employees are publicly exposed. Wrongs are done; but no one seems to do them. Like the farmyard conflagration they appear to result not from any human agency, but from an inevitable combination of circumstances. To a devout capitalist the act of the corporation, like the bolt of lightning, is an act of God.

These illustrations clarify the logic, or rather, the illogic, of corporate activity. Because the functions of the individuals are related to one another in certain ways there emerges a certain result. This result, in order to simplify matters and to give the impression at least that some one is responsible, we call the act of the corporation. When the 'corporation' does something, so far as we can discover, it is only the individuals who act. None of the individuals, however, does precisely the act attributed to the corporation. Each of them performs another, specialized task; and the combination of these activities of all the individuals issues as the final corporate result. No one individual can be designated as the cause or saddled with the blame; but the result could not have come about without the acts which each of the individuals performed. Individuals, then, are in the end responsible; but the responsibility is neither direct, immediate, nor simple. It is well nigh impossible to assess. The evils resulting from corporate practices and rationalized through the legal fiction are often ascribed to unfortunate economic conditions, to the inevitable fluctuations of business, or to the natural hazards of corporate enterprise. People shrug their shoulders and say that there is no help for such things. They assume that there is

a great economic law which operates above their heads and makes them serve, like puppets, in the business scheme. Men and women who might otherwise be free moral agents perform habitual acts the control of whose consequences they have surrendered to the ideology of their institutions. Having set up the corporation as a convenient device for serving men, they turn about and enslave men to the fiction of the Corporate Person.

#### IV

When a 'corporation' enters into a relationship with an individual, who is it that really enters into such relationship? Clearly it is not the mystical corporate person. Nor can we say that other individuals, under the corporate symbol, enter into the relation. Certain words, of course, are written or spoken by individuals; but these words have been selected not as free expressions of those who utter them, but according to the fixed requirements of business, the canons of good advertising, or the policy of a company. The individual who writes or speaks them often does not even see the person by whom they are received; nor does he pursue the issue with him by any personal contact. The stimuli of corporate communication are launched through one-way channels, such as the catalogue, the circular letter, the billboard, the newspaper, the magazine, the cinema, and the radio. There extends between their authors and their recipients a chasm of time, space, and alignment of interests which cannot be bridged. Individuals acting in their so-called corporate capacity seldom respond to one another in a free, face to face manner, or as complete individual personalities. The use and art of personal communication has been increasingly displaced. And with the lapse of communication there has declined also the sense of fellow-feeling and the individual's responsibility for the corporate consequences of his acts. The letter notifying the employee of his discharge or of the cut in his wages, a message so tragic for its recipient, becomes, for its sender, a matter of routine. When the officials of a land company foreclose they do not hear the weeping of those who must give up their homes.

A parallel is to be found in those vast operations, corporate

in character, through which modern warfare is conducted. Here a special feature, the powerful, corporately-created machinery of destruction, still further separates the person who acts from the person who suffers the result. The commander of the submarine has only to give his orders. A subordinate calculates the distance, time, and course of the projectile, and transmits this information. The man in the firing squad has only to set the machinery according to the figures he has received and pull the lever. Machinery, controlled through corporate activity, will do the rest. It is an easy matter to do these simple, mechanical tasks. To be compelled to take a thousand human beings, however, and to drown them, one by one, with one's own hands (a result which is precisely that of the corporate activity) would render warfare too outrageous to be permitted for a moment in modern civilization. Not only in war but in peace, machines operated in a corporate manner are daily controlling the lives of millions. The individuals who operate them, however, seldom meet the individuals whom they affect in any personal relationship. In many instances they never see them; nor do they see the myriad ramifications and human consequences of these impersonal forms of control. Machinery, distance, anonymity, and the substitution of institutional fictions for the free communication of individuals,—these are some of the devices through which we have separated the actor from his deed, and have made of individuals the irresponsible servants of their corporate habits.

## V

Ghost-like as corporate individuality appears upon careful analysis, it is substantial enough to those who are interested in gaining through it some special advantage. The fiction is used by those who are inside the group in ways directly opposite to the manner in which it is employed by those outside. It is also used in opposite senses at different times by those who are within the group. Like Aladdin's lamp, it has a genius which permits almost any use according to the wish of its possessor. The corporation and the individual are the scenery in the drama which we may call modern business. They can be shifted about to suit



the stage-manager's convenience. In the dividing of profits the corporate fiction is lifted, and the dividends flow to the individual stockholders. When it comes to the matter of liabilities, however, the back-drop of corporate personality is lowered; and the individual stockholders either make their exit or merge imperceptibly into this concealing background. If 'the company' succeeds, its members get rich; if, later, it fails, its members (provided they have invested their winnings elsewhere) may stay rich. Since the corporate personality is a pure idea, incapable of investigation and known only in the realm of imagination, almost anything can be done with it without the risk of being taken too specifically to task.

Great fortunes nowadays usually take the form of holdings in large corporations. Through this method both the capital fortunes and the incomes of individuals are concealed. Recipients of million-dollar incomes are usually regarded not as enemies of the people, but as financiers. So long as surpluses are so invested as to keep the wheels of industry turning and to give employment to workers, their possessors are not only absolved from the sin of exploitation, but are regarded as true benefactors of society. A rich man does not need to wait for the camel to go through the eye of the needle. A few wisely selected philanthropies will easily lift from him the stigma of selfishness and will arouse such gratitude that the size of his fortune still remaining will pass unquestioned. In the meantime, however, the rich grow richer, and the poor stay where they are. The true perspective concerning men of wealth, the appraisal of their social value and of the measure in which they are fulfilling their responsibilities, are distorted by our corporate thinking. Acts are separated from their consequences; motives are hidden behind the veil of corporate action.

The subtle and convenient quality of any fiction is that it can be used by so many people and for so many different purposes. It is not only the members of a corporation who find the corporate symbol to their advantage, but non-members as well. One can be enriched either by identifying one's self with a successful corporation or by using the corporate habits of the

members to their own disadvantage. The graft, unfair privilege, and stealing against the assets of a company which are made possible by manipulating the machinery of corporate action have reached disquieting proportions. A dishonest official may embezzle funds by so altering the books as to make it appear that the concern is running properly; a company's claims-inspector may be bribed to approve a new piece of machinery to replace one damaged through the customer's fault; the head of a corporation may use the votes of the employees to bargain with a political candidate or office-holder. Employees who do not identify 'the corporation's' interest with their own frequently pilfer, waste, and practice sabotage. In vain do their superiors plead for loyalty to the firm; for the firm is conveniently regarded by such employees as a myth. Since everyone in the company, including those higher up, seems to be looking out for his own good, they see no reason why they should not do likewise. A light-fingered traveler who takes the towels from the Pullman car or from his hotel does not usually regard his act as stealing. He may, in fact, be scrupulously honest in his ordinary personal dealings. He considers that this act is done against a corporation rather than against an individual; and is therefore not truly immoral. The proportion of the actual loss, moreover, when distributed among the individuals of the corporation, seems to him so small as to be practically non-existent. The corporate process, both within and outside the organization, thus prevents the formation of consistently honest characters in men and women. Individuals who profit by exploiting the corporate fiction lose insight into the meaning of their own acts. Failing to recognize their own motives, they practice deception not only upon others, but also upon themselves. Already lacking in social responsibility, they become intellectually dishonest as well.

## VI

In this challenge of the idea of a limited liability corporation I am not attacking the fundamental idea of coöperation. In so far as corporate behavior is a means whereby an individual satisfies his wants more effectively by doing his part of the world's work,

its utility cannot be questioned. Coöperation as an adjustment to nature through a community of effort, so that all can live with a minimum of hardship and friction, was indeed a great discovery. But the modern corporate idea, as I see it, goes much further than this. It involves not only the satisfaction of needs by reciprocal labor, but the assumption that the coöperating group is a person who can act independently of the individuals concerned, an assumption which, though acknowledged to be a fiction, has consequences of the most serious sort. The vocations of most people today are intimately bound up with our economic system. Their life-supporting occupations, whether they be of hand or brain, must lie somewhere in the sphere of business and industry. Forms of organization through which leadership can be exerted in the field of economic activities convey, therefore, a peculiarly extensive control over human lives. And men who are the heads of such organizations are given, through the corporate fiction, an access to unprecedented power. The process of incorporation and the legal principle of the corporate personality therefore go far beyond the mere economical division and organization of effort. They comprise not merely coöperation, but the opportunity to exploit coöperation.

There may have been a time in the course of industrial history when this authority conferred upon business leaders was justified. When there was still much to learn about the organizing of work, the encouragement of such endeavors through rewards allotted to promoters was perhaps a useful expedient. In so far as intricate and powerful machinery was needed, organizations for financing and building such machines may have had their legitimate place. But now that men have learned how to work co-operatively and have developed their technology almost to the point of diminishing returns, there is little justification for preserving a fiction which enables those processes to go on, for private gain, beyond all reason and control. The objection that business cannot be run without the ideology of corporations is probably an illusion. The processes of production, exchange, and consumption have existed from the most primitive times, and were flourishing long before the era of competitive, corporate expansion arrived. It is true that business cannot very well be

enlarged, we cannot pursue the goal of *bigger* business, without the corporate idea. Without it the enormous development of inventions and industrial processes which we have witnessed in recent years could scarcely continue. If it were not for the corporate fiction, we could not have business and technology as fields of enterprise for ambitious men. But do we need such fields at the present time?

In small scale industry, in which the manager was also the owner, the potentialities of the corporate process were not so clearly felt. But as technology, transportation, and world communication developed, the opportunities which this device afforded to those who were economically enterprising became apparent. We entered an era characterized by expanded business and widely distributed, absentee ownership; and these movements, while they proved what vast accumulations of wealth could be produced through corporate practices, also exaggerated the evils of corporate irresponsibility. Retarded only by the occurrence of a business depression, we were drifting into a period of still greater expansion. Corporations, already large, were being merged into still greater ones; so that the control of the industries of the country seemed to be coming in the hands of a relatively small group. 'Super-magnates' of this sort often have nothing to do either with the actual work of production or with the people who work. They are neither craftsmen, personnel directors, nor factory managers; but financiers. The corporate fiction has thus been used to transfer the control over economic life from the hands of those directly engaged to those who are remote from the scene, from those who understand the problems of men and women in industry to adventurers in high finance. Human personalities, traits of character, standards worked out and cherished through long human relationships,—these have come, in modern corporations, to mean little. The corporate person is a de-humanized person indeed.

## VII

Admitting these defects, those who are corporately-minded will urge that we try to correct them not by throwing away a principle which has proved so useful in our material progress, but by wise legislation and by education. Can we not persuade the

heads of corporations to adopt a broader social outlook and to assume their full measure of responsibility? Legislation I am willing to accept as a solution; but in order really to eliminate these evils legislation would need, I fear, to be so drastic as virtually to abolish the idea of the corporate person with all its attendant privileges and immunities. And as for the social enlightenment of business leaders, what promise can we hold out? As long as we keep our corporate system of business are we not appealing to men to be fair and unselfish, while leaving in their hands a powerful weapon for injustice and greed? Is not the believer in socially-minded corporations in the same position as the patriot who argues for an equal opportunity for all nations, yet clings to his own national loyalty, his foreign investments, and his marines?

Even if the spirit were willing, it would be well-nigh impossible, from an intellectual standpoint, to prescribe an enlightened ethics for the individual in his corporate relationships. Let us remember that the results which the corporation is said to accomplish are not identical with the acts of individuals at all; they are the outcome of combined acts which are altogether different in character. How can we hold an individual fully responsible for a result which he himself did not bring about, for something which he did not actually do? And how can we determine the particular degree of liability which he, as his share in the corporate responsibility, should assume? Corporate activity does not work as components of physical force which can be analyzed and measured. It cannot be understood in terms of grams and centimeters, but only with reference to meaning and human consequence. Let us imagine that a number of people have organized themselves into a corporation for mutual profit, in which the plan of organization is complex and shifting, and the avowed intention is one not of breaking, but of obeying the law and of being governed by a spirit of social obligation. Let us suppose, however, that, when dividends are forthcoming, these profits are partly the outcome of a legitimate and useful business, but partly also the result of a certain injustice to workers or competitors, and of a real, though imponderable, damage to personal values, market

conditions, and economic stability. We are now faced not only by the baffling problem of determining the degree in which to hold the various individuals liable and of prescribing the ways in which they can make amends, but also by the hopelessness of trying to measure the damage itself. Even granting that the members of the corporation are willing to change their methods, we can hardly foresee, in our complex society, the new consequences to which their altered policy might lead. Nor could we always guarantee, through our own redirection of their corporate behavior, that a greater amount of welfare than of injury would result.

With regard to apportioning responsibility, it is true that the motives of certain individuals stand closer than those of others to the apparent purpose and the consequences of the corporate act. In a certain sense the managing directors *are*, or at least seem to be, the corporation. Others, for example, subordinate executives, may have a partial knowledge and control of the outcome. Many, however, such as the small absentee stockholder, have neither an understanding of the result of the corporate activity, nor power to alter it if they so desired. Yet regardless of these differences in degree, all derive their existence, or benefit in some measure, from the corporate process. If it were not for the acts of all (even those of the humblest members), working together under the principle of corporate immunity, the result in question would not have come to pass. But who can estimate the amount in which the act of any particular individual has contributed to the total outcome? In our farmyard analogy, although the fire would probably not have occurred without the presence of all the elements, the drouth, the proximity of the hay to the barn, as well as the stroke of lightning, nevertheless we cannot measure the degree in which any one of these elements acted as a cause. Their explanation seems to lie in the pattern or situation as a whole.

### VIII

In one important respect, however, the corporate situation differs from the fire which was set by lightning. The physical and chemical laws operating in a conflagration seem to take their

course entirely apart from human motives. Once the materials are placed, or occur, in a certain relationship, the fire takes place. Nothing can be done by the elements themselves to prevent it. With regard to corporate activity, on the other hand, there is a great deal which the elements, that is, the individuals, can do. That which they can accomplish, however, must be done in advance of the event itself. Once they have committed themselves to the corporate pattern and its accompanying fiction, they are bound to play their prescribed rôles; for the individual then loses control of the consequences. As a routine actor in a corporation he has scarcely more power to change the corporate result than has the haystack to keep itself from being set on fire by the lightning. But unlike the haystack, the lightning, and the barn, human beings are free to choose whether they will place themselves in the corporate relationship or not; though it is granted, of course, that a large enough number of individuals must agree upon this course to make their decisions effective in the social order. Even though they may choose to act coöperatively, it lies within their power to reject the theory that they are, in such activity, subservient to a corporation having a personality of its own. We cannot retain our ethical autonomy when submerged in corporations or working as agents hidden under the corporate fiction; but we are not obliged to function as members of such organizations. If enough of us make the choice, we can choose whether, in our society, corporate action and the corporate philosophy shall continue as the characteristic form of human action.

It may be fairly questioned whether any conduct which is based upon a fiction will contribute permanently to human welfare. Fictions may, perhaps, be found useful for a time. They may give us a temporary measure of assurance or consolation. But do they not also conceal certain unrecognized desires, or a shrinking from realities which, sooner or later, we must face? What would we think of a physician who based his treatment of a disease upon an acknowledged fiction regarding the human body? What would happen to an engineer who computed the strength of his building materials upon a metaphysical postulate which could not be tested by experience? In the social sciences and in human rela-

tions, however, as in religion, fictions are still given a respected place. We still attempt to live our lives and to regulate society according to certain cherished assumptions, though we have neither the ground for believing them nor the means of putting them to the test. An advocate of the notion of the corporate person may attempt to lay claim to a justification for his fiction which is not open to the natural scientist or the engineer. For he concedes that the projects of the latter, if based upon fictions, will fail; whereas his, as he assures us, has a chance to succeed. He accepts his corporate ideology because he believes it works; and he points to our colossal material civilization as his witness. But even upon the grounds of his own pragmatism he may be wrong. It is possible that at the very pinnacle of our exploits we are nearest to our fall. Our recent era of unbounded prosperity may have been a fool's paradise; and in the uncertainty which lies ahead we may reap the whirlwind which the followers of this gigantic illusion have sown. When our fictions make us strangers to ourselves, when they lead us to one result under the appearance of producing another, when they cancel responsibility, destroy consistency of character, and substitute confusion and deceit, have we any longer the right to call them fictions? Do they not become fallacies instead?



---

---

## XII

### THE LIFE STREAM AND THE BUSINESS FUNNEL

---

---

A FRIEND OF MINE once made a journey to a certain large city. While walking about the streets at noonday looking for a place to eat, his attention was attracted to a placard in a window. The card announced that any patron dining in that establishment would be given all that he could eat, for the regular price (by no means excessive) at which the luncheon was offered. Warmed by the glow of such hospitality, he entered and sat down at a table. The homelike spirit of the display card he soon felt also to be permeating the atmosphere inside. Instead of the brusque, impersonal din of the ordinary restaurant, with all its hurry and its lack of civility, my friend was surprised to note in the behavior of the girl who waited upon him a marked friendliness and a personal interest in his comfort. The manager, the cashier, the waitresses, and the bus boys,—all, from the highest to the lowest, exhibited a common awareness and the morale of a helpful spirit. No cross word was spoken among them; there were only smiles. In spite of the demands of a brisk business, everything ran as smoothly as the coöperation of a large and devoted family. It was a family in which the diner was not a mere customer, but a welcomed guest.

When he had quieted the sharpest pangs of his hunger, my friend called the waitress to him and asked her for an explanation. Was this universal politeness and coöperation a form of conduct which the employees had developed spontaneously among themselves; or was there some other reason for it? Her reply at once dispelled all mystery. She informed my friend that the good cheer, the kindness, and the home-like atmosphere which had so impressed him were established policies of the company. Employees were selected and retained upon the basis of their qualifications for such behavior. Stress was placed by the manager

upon keeping up the standard of hospitality, and careful methods of training were prescribed. Regardless of whether the individual employees were naturally genial, it was clear that the geniality which permeated the institution was neither unconscious nor accidental.

Another thing which my friend noted was that this restaurant had a flourishing trade. Hospitality is not only a pleasing quality in the abstract; it can be made to pay. The establishment, moreover, was not a solitary, local business, but a unit in a great chain of restaurants all under one management. The same policy of generosity, kindness, and the home-spirit was therefore being extended to hosts of diners in many parts of the land. Not only were thousands of people generously fed, but their spirits were buoyed up while they ate; and they were receiving an object-lesson in friendly courtesy which they might carry with them throughout the day. Now if the managers of this particular company have found the method of kindly and genial service so profitable, the heads of rival companies will probably be compelled to adopt it also, or else suffer loss through competition. Is it not natural, also, to suppose that what is happening in the restaurant business will be duplicated in other fields? Hotels, gasoline filling stations, and bus systems are already coming to be operated upon the same principle. In time, the managers of every large, competitive organization may learn to display, in their business practices, a high degree of good will, and may establish the slogan of helpfulness and good cheer, not only as the badge of their own success, but as an example for men and women everywhere. The gospel of service inherent in our business civilization will raise the standards of individuals to a higher plane.

This cheerful vision of a world redeemed through business may well give us pause. If it can be realized, we shall owe to our commercial experts a debt of gratitude which we can hardly ever repay. Yet if one considers the matter carefully, certain difficulties begin to arise; a note of doubt is injected into this harmony of modern business ethics. We must ask, for one thing, whether the waitress who has to wear a smiling countenance

through all the fatigue and vexation of her day's work carries a genial heart as well. Does she have the true, inner emotion of kindness, or only its outward form? Is she liberal with her own personality, or only with the company's goods? One wonders, also, whether she will be as friendly at home or on the street car as she is in the restaurant. Let us take another example. It is very convenient and pleasant to drive up and have the Standard Oil employee put water in our radiator with a cordial smile, regardless of whether we buy any gasoline or not; but will the tired wayfarer who asks for a glass of water be received with the same cheerful countenance and friendly hand? Will the attendant, when he goes home at night, help his neighbor if he finds him in need; or must his neighbor, in order to receive help, drive up to the filling station in an automobile? It seems far more certain that the ideal world of business ethics will be made up of situations in which every one will have learned to be generous than that it will be composed of individuals who will react generously in all situations. Kindness is less likely to be an attribute of individuals than of 'institutions.' We shall have an altruistic 'society,' but where will be our altruistic men and women?

## II

Let us think of the continuity of human life through two contrasting metaphors. First, let us imagine a river, broad and deep, through whose channel there flow the various interests, activities, talents, and desires of a human being. All these are carried along together unimpeded as the river, seeking its self-realization, sweeps onward toward the sea. Now let us picture a huge funnel placed athwart the river's channel with its smaller opening pointing downstream. Into the mouth of this funnel there now pour all the individual's habits, likings, creative impulses, and abilities which previously had flowed freely, side by side. Like currents and eddies, they are, upon entering the funnel, highly diversified. They are of all sizes and shapes; they are possessed of individual rates and peculiarities of motion. But when the stream emerges at the smaller end we find that a transformation and standardization have taken place. The interests of too great a dimension

never come forth. They are dammed up and lost to the onward stream. Others, whose shape does not fit the outlet, must be compressed and distorted in order to pass through. Differences of swiftness and direction are also made uniform as they are funneled through the narrowed outlet. Whereas previously all the functions of life received an opportunity for their maximum expression, now they are governed and restricted by the aperture through which they must pass.

This symbol of the funnel across the stream of life describes a situation in which individuals have become dominated by their institutional habits, where uniform ways of behaving have become so firmly established that they prohibit the flow of an individual's free choice and desire. A child, beginning his search for self-realization, is directed, through teaching and example, into the mouth of this great funnel. He is usually led to believe that he is progressing toward his ideal career, that he is passing with his fellows through that straight and narrow way which leads to a perfectly adjusted society. It is none the less true, however, that, in an institutionalized era, a human life, with all its myriad interests and hidden tendencies, is forced through the narrow gauge of custom which at the time is paramount in popular estimation. At the present time this gauge, the spout of our funnel, is represented by our business habits.

The guardians of the funnel maintain that its presence in the life stream is justified. They point out that modern civilization has been founded upon economic prosperity and its attendant security and leisure. Our great humanitarian agencies, our schools, colleges, laboratories, hospitals, museums, libraries, and churches would be impossible, they remind us, without the wealth which flows from invested capital. Music and art, science and invention, and all our religious and philanthropic organizations profit richly by the support of business men. We could never have developed our present machinery, our laboratories, nor our endowments for research without the returns from commercial enterprise. This may be true. But let us not forget that these things are, after all, the *tools* used in the sciences and humanities, and not their essential nature. Medicine goes back to Hippocrates.

Religion and philosophy are probably as old as humanity. There flourished in antiquity colleges which, as far as technological development was concerned, were completely barren: they were mere meeting places for the conversations of teachers and students. Yet out of them have come some of the finest intellectual productions of men. Scientists were zealously at work long before the foundations derived from the profits of business had made the modern microscope and telescope available. To be sure, important discoveries had to wait upon these devices; but let us not forget that instruments, however elaborate, are but scraps of metal without the zeal and the intelligence which drive men to pursue the quest itself. Techniques alone can never yield great discoveries; detached scientific interest, curiosity, devotion, thoroughness, and humility are also fundamental. However richly the income from business may endow our laboratories, it can contribute not one iota to the development of these latter qualities, and it may in some instances discourage them.

A further argument of those who hold the economic funnel is that capital not only aids in creating the means of learning, but brings its products into touch with the life of the common man. While there is truth in this contention, there is concealed in it, also, a source of danger. The art, the science, the philosophy, and the religion which philanthropic capitalists have made accessible are not wholly free. These creative impulses do not receive the same kind of expression which they might find if they could flow in channels of their own choosing. The choice of these intellectual pursuits as vocations is also seriously affected by our economic bias. In a social order based on machine production and accelerated salesmanship the incentive and opportunity for a young person to follow a gainful profession in art, letters, science, or philosophy are relatively meagre. Liberal arts colleges are tending to become service schools supplying the sciences and humanities, in a diluted form, to suit the needs of the busy vocational curriculum. Technical schools, such as those of engineering and business, are multiplying. Laboratories are increasing in number; but they seem to be dominated more often by the applications of science than by the pursuit of science itself.

While universities are thriving in attendance and endowment, the aims of technological and commercial enterprise are driving from their curricula many of those liberal interests by which they were formerly enriched.

But after all, the lives of most people are not lived in contact with laboratories, museums, colleges, or other intellectual centers. They are absorbed in the great, routine processes of production and exchange, in the rôles of workmen, factory employees, machine operators, clerks, merchants, salesmen, farmers, and business executives. It is in these common walks of life, rather than in its cultural bypaths, that we should seek the consequences of our economic régime. In what manner do human desires for individuality, beauty, scientific understanding, social communication, altruism, and religion receive expression in the daily activities of average men and women? Does life today permit the pursuit and enjoyment of these values in the course of the day's work, that is, through production, through selling, through business routine and management, and through the goods which our industrial system provides? Are these interests served or hampered by the business funnel?

### III

Let us begin with art. Experts in selling are not slow to announce the aesthetic merits of modern salesmanship. Window displays, posters, and magazine advertising have become highly artistic. Advertisers and manufacturers proclaim, as the fruit of their labors, a rising standard of taste in dress, in manners, in food, in home decoration, in the care of the person, and in life generally. Increasing beauty of design, they will point out, is also characteristic of our manufactured products themselves. Automobiles, victrolas, and radios have become objects of grace and dignity. The hideous gasoline station of yesterday is being transformed into a picturesque detail of the landscape. Iron and concrete, the building blocks of a machine age, are yielding a new architectural beauty, while skyscrapers of the latest design inspire in us a sense of magnificence akin to awe. Admitting all this, it may still be questioned whether the artistic elevation of material objects used in our habits of consumption really meets

the aesthetic needs of individuals. For after all, it is not the passive receiving of sensations from the goods given to us by machines which develops our capacity for aesthetic expression. Active participation, also, is required. Fully to enjoy the beautiful, an individual must, in some degree, create it. It must be something he does, not merely something which falls upon his eyes or ears. The beauties afforded by the appeals and the products of manufacturers are usually passive enjoyments; they lack the intimate, creative element. The more music we hear over the radio, the less is our own incentive and effort toward a creative appreciation of that art. The more fully drama is given over to the cinema, the less frequently will the arts of the stage become a widespread popular and vocational interest. The more our surroundings are beautified by the activities which we call business, the less chance will there be for us, as individuals, to create a loveliness of our own.

To make aesthetic satisfactions mere incidents of consumption is to rob consumers of insight into themselves. A man who has a beautiful motor car, a stately house, or a graceful yacht may be really less capable of appreciating their beauty than a man who admires such objects without owning them; for in the case of the former the aesthetic impulse is likely to become confused with the pride of possession. It is not recognized at its full value because it seldom operates alone, but usually in connection with other interests. It must pass through the funnel and emerge, not as pure, but as commercialized art. The only awakening many people have to their own capacities for beauty is limited by our present economic conditions to the medium of technological progress. One thinks of one's self as listening not only to an orchestra, but to the radio. The result, all too frequently, is an uncritical acceptance of everything, the ugly as well as the beautiful, which the radio brings. In a similar manner display advertising, on billboard and in magazine, canalizes the beautiful through media which are profitable to men of business. If advertisers were truly interested in the popular aesthetic cultivation, they would liberate this motive for a wider appreciation. They would point out the

glories of the woods, the fields, and the sunset as well as the resplendent polish of limousines. They would help people to recognize that love of beauty which, lying within themselves, is independent of the devices of a machine age.

The self-chosen rôle of the entrepreneurs as the benefactors of art must be accepted with considerable reservation. Men's aesthetic impulse dates back to the drawings on the walls of prehistoric caves. It has been at work among all peoples of the earth in proportion as their circumstances have permitted. It probably needs no fostering commercial genius to quicken it to activity. These business patrons of the muses have, I suspect, another and quite different motive for their entrance into the aesthetic field. Owing to the increasing perfection of the mechanical side of inventions, some new appeal must be sought for manufactured products in order to capture sales and to win in the stress of competition. The aesthetic appeal, based as it is upon a deep and universal desire, has abundantly answered this need. The advertisement which is delightfully colored is not merely artistic; it attracts attention. People do not merely admire beautiful automobiles; they want to ride in them. Motorists are not only impressed by ornate filling stations; they like to stop at them for their gasoline. Business men, therefore, are not helping men's aesthetic expression, so much as the aesthetic impulse, through their clever manipulation, is helping them. Instead of being taught to know themselves as lovers of the beautiful in its humblest and most universal forms, instead of being encouraged to follow their love of beauty wherever it may lead them, men and women are continually misled by the association of this impulse with commercial objects and with the prestige which comes from possession and display.

#### IV

What is true of art in the present age holds also for science. The profits of capital have done a substantial service in perfecting equipment, in endowing laboratories, and in popularizing significant discoveries. But while the marvels of modern scientific disclosures have been heralded far and wide, it is to be doubted



whether there has been fostered any true appreciation of the meaning of science itself. Popular interests seem to lie not in the adventure or the insights of disinterested research, but in the machines and the services made possible by commercializing the fruits of research. Most persons probably think of science in terms of some new and more powerful type of engine, some labor-saving process, some synthetic chemical formula, or some remarkable new serum for the control of a disease. These achievements, though dependent upon scientific work, are not science itself, any more than the radio instrument is music. In a recent textbook of modern science written for the beginner, the frontispiece portrays an aeroplane soaring gracefully above the clouds. Spectacular and engrossing as this appeal may be, it seems to me precisely the wrong way in which to begin the education of a child. Unless a youth can come to handle with eagerness the simple objects before him, wondering why they behave as they do, unless he is impelled to inquire about the laws which hold throughout his natural world quite independently of how men use them, he will never see the true vision of a scientist. Filling our world with devices for applying scientific discoveries to practical ends will not give him this experience. It may, on the contrary, lead him directly away from it. I am depressed at the thought of my children growing up in an age when the aeroplane, the radio, and perhaps television, will be taken as a matter of course. They may not be so likely to wonder, as I have wondered, about the movements of the atmosphere or the propagation of energy through unknown space. The study of these subtle mysteries, which has seemed so thrilling in my generation, may be for them a *fait accompli*. The curiosity of tomorrow's children about nature will have changed to a marveling at the ingenuity of man; their thirst for knowledge may become a stupid bewilderment. They may even give up nature's riddles altogether, considering them as interests open to specialists but impossible for them. Shocked into complacency by technological marvels, they may finally become immune even to surprise.

For me, the glory of the aeroplane lies not in the future, but in the past. I see little gain in looking forward to an age of trans-

atlantic travel by air. What appealed most strongly to my imagination, and to the imaginations of many, were the first feeble but victorious efforts of the Wright brothers on their maiden flights. Technology, precisely because imperfect, was then a more vivid reality. It was the age of experimenting rather than perfecting. Aeroplanes were heroic adventures, not mere substitutes for our beasts of burden. Where full technological mastery and commercial exploitation appear, the testing of ingenuity and the thrill of adventure are as good as dead. When aerial highways are safe and common, the romance of Lindbergh will be no more.

But, after all, neither the aeroplane, nor any other of our marvelous, modern devices, are really contributions to science. They represent applications of scientific principles rather than avenues to their discovery. It is true that they can be used as tools for exploration and observation. Their principal value, however, lies not in the office of revealing nature to men, but in expressing men's resourcefulness and courage in adapting themselves to nature. In order to make this a truly scientific era it will be necessary for us to slow down our perfecting of inventions. We must begin to think about what nature *is* rather than about what nature can be made to do. The meaning of science can be felt only in the search for a continually more universal experience; and the thrill of the universal can be encountered only in handling those objects which are universal. This means that it is to be found in the humble and commonplace rather than in the spectacular. When we shall have become more interested in electro-magnetism than in turning radio knobs, when the exploration of the elements is more engrossing to us than patent building blocks and synthetic perfumes, we shall be upon the road to an age of science.

## V

Our social personalities, in an age devoted mainly to business, are no freer than our science and art. Here again, the difficulty is not that we are lacking in capacities for sociability, but that, having set the stage primarily for economic behavior, we must suffer our social amenities to play a subordinate, even a sub-

servient, part. An influential real estate broker of my acquaintance recently rented a large furnished house for the summer. Wondering why a bachelor should desire quarters so much larger than he needed, I made so bold as to ask him. He replied that he expected to do a fair amount of entertaining, but added, in the next breath, that "many a big deal is put across during a good luncheon." It was not that this man was essentially insincere. He is one of the most friendly persons I have known. Always delighting to do some one a good turn, he has been given by his associates the epithet of "good-natured." But he is also equally noted for his shrewdness, if not his sharp dealing, in the business field. To this man, as to the benefactors of art and science, commercial success has brought an opportunity for service to his fellows. But in his case, as in theirs, we find that the humane impulses are funneled through a channel of business practice which mingles selfishness with benevolence, and prevents the latter from developing to its full, untrammelled expression. My 'good-hearted' friend can never be completely himself, for there are two sides of his nature which are in continual conflict. While success in business makes it possible for him to do kind acts, it demands, at other times, behavior of the opposite character. Kindness of this sort is impulsive rather than reflective; it cannot become a constant trait or an abiding ideal throughout life. Nor can human relationships attain under these conditions the level of a deep and helpful understanding. Social contacts behind which the possibility of some business advantage is lurking can never be full or vital; for there are so many corners of one's personality, so many avenues of communication, which, in the interest of the transaction, must be carefully guarded. When we pour our lives through the channel of an institution we can never know one another as men and women.

In contrast with the successful 'realtor' there comes to my mind a certain humble merchant in my vicinity. He too is both commercial in his occupation and social in his interests; but instead of funneling his social impulse through his business relationships, he has given it an outlet of its own, even allowing it, at times, to rise superior to the commercial aim. Since he

does not try to be 'good-hearted' and at the same time to increase his profits, there is no inner conflict in his behavior. Located in a residential community within a large city, his hardware shop is a rendezvous for people having many and diverse needs. When there are a number of customers in his store at one time, he deals with them all together like a large family. His motive being nicely balanced between service to all and a reasonable profit for himself, I have heard him point out the defects of his merchandise as freely as I have heard him commend it. I often see him in the rear of his shop, in his shirt sleeves, and with the stub of a cigar in his mouth, mending some broken toy or utensil. He has a personal interest in his customers and inquires concerning their illness and their family problems. He also has a pride in his store: it is a part of himself. On Mothers' Day he hangs a large portrait of his mother in the front window. There are no compartments or shutters between his business self and his rôle of human interest and fellowship; in everything he does he can reveal his true character. I am convinced that this merchant will never become wealthy. How he can continue to do business in our present era of chain stores and competition is beyond my understanding. But, though ignoring most of the canons of modern retail selling, he is thriving in a modest sort of way; and I have seen a more enterprising competitor, across the street, go out of business. The values which people seek, even in business, cannot always be measured in terms of money.

## VI

Benevolence and religion also are affected through the tendencies of a business civilization. The indirection by which men seek to harmonize their altruism with the sterner rule of profits is one of the pathetic spectacles of our time. The struggle of competition, the urge to lower costs and to capture wider markets, has made the shrewd, successful business man an heroic figure and a social ideal. Any service done in the course of business which is performed at a financial loss without hope of a subsequent return is likely to be branded as unbusiness-like. Events have shown, however, that a code of this sort will not

suffice to drive kindness completely from the human scene. Though pushed out of the front door, it will, figuratively speaking, come around and creep in at the back. Unfortunately, however, it must be smuggled in under some other name, the individual never appreciating this trait in himself for what it truly is. Having accepted the judgment that kindness by itself is unbusiness-like, he turns about and persuades himself that business *includes* kindness. In some instances, no doubt, the tendency to identify business with service is merely a form of advertising or a bid for the social recognition of the entrepreneur. Judging, however, from the conviction of those who use this slogan and from the tone of moral earnestness with which it is uttered, there is also a sincere desire to unite commercial interests with a wider regard for human welfare.

I know of at least one neighborhood, in the Middle West, where the bread of business is cast upon the waters in an elaborate way. When a new family moves into the locality, they are no sooner settled than there appears at their door an attractive horse-drawn vehicle, painted white, and inscribed with the legend, "Welcome Wagon." A neatly attired messenger brings into the house a basket of groceries and supplies bearing the labels of local merchants. Presenting these gifts to the new occupants, he welcomes them to the community. Now the merchant who is a member of this 'board of welcomers' probably feels that he is doing a generous and noble deed. The recipient of the gift, experiencing not only a sense of being at home in the community, but a natural gratitude toward the donor, will be likely to establish trading relations with the latter. Business and service thus go merrily hand in hand. The kindness which is found to pay so well in this episode is, however, kindness only to prospective customers; it is not extended to the world at large. The practice also is certainly not a blessing to competing merchants who, not having as yet espoused the new gospel of welcome, must forfeit the trade which their benevolent *confrères* gain. We lose the point of this illustration, however, if we wave the welcome merchant aside with the remark that his welcome is mere hypocrisy. It seems to me that he has a genuine, if not an unmixed desire, to

do someone a service; and this impulse renders the bestowal of free groceries a pleasure quite apart from the business advantage involved. The service, however, is limited to certain beneficiaries and to certain times and places; it cannot express a general trait in the personality of the giver, a generosity by which he may be known in all circumstances and by all people. It must remain a compartmentalized kindness, unintegrated with the life of the one who renders it and often at conflict with his other acts and values. No standard of conduct can be seen in its full meaning to its possessor until it is made to compete with other values. The measure of a service is not how well it pays, but how much it costs. As long as kindness is expressed only in situations where it can be covered by profits, we can never know how kind we really are.

Another familiar method for the harmonizing of self-sacrifice with business principles is through commercial and civic luncheon clubs. Men who, in their business lives, have been working under the shrewd competitive formula of every man for himself, suddenly break forth, in the name of Rotary or Kiwanis, into magnificent contributions to hospitals for crippled children and similar benefactions. Some of them try to save their faces and the business code by referring to these charities as a good form of advertising. I once heard an influential Rotarian, a man of genuine, though unconscious, kindness, make the following statement: "Of course we do a lot of charitable things through Rotary; but every one of us fellows know that the thing which *counts* is the ability of a man to get hold of the almighty dollar." Yet no matter how cynical a business man may be in his private conversation, when he enters the sanctum of his luncheon club, his moral earnestness and his pride in the achievements of his organization are unmistakable. The name of his organization is spoken reverently, as though it indicated not a certain group of individuals, but an eternal principle radiating joy and brotherhood throughout the world.

Carping critics who dismiss the new business ethics with ridicule are missing, it seems to me, a significant point. The altruism expressed through these social organizations of business men is

not sham. It represents an unmistakable feeling of kindness which is probably operative in nearly every member. Under the business code through which his personal habits and values are at present funneled, an individual, however, can find no socially recognized outlet for this impulse. He therefore seeks its expression through group activity. He turns to projects which seem to spring not from himself, but from his organization, or perhaps more vaguely from Business itself, and which, therefore, evoke the approval, rather than the disparagement, of business men. Alms-giving organizations are thus proxies for the charitable feeling of their members. By closing their eyes to the kindness which is their own, the members can project their benevolence upon their 'institutions.' They can claim allegiance, as individual business men, to a selfish code of ethics, and yet, as a group, perform unselfish deeds. All that is required is to be a good Rotarian. Rotary will do the rest. The pathos of the situation is that such men must remain strangers to themselves. The social image of themselves as business men, upon which they have fixed their gaze, is in conflict with the rest of their natures. Their charity must remain boxed up in one compartment, or 'sublimated' into the will of a fictitious over-person such as the corporate group or Business at large. Kindness is not permitted to develop as a recognized trait of their natures, and to be suffused throughout their private conduct. While in the field of Rotary they are gaining altruistic expression, they may, in other relationships, be acting in a manner directly contradictory to their altruism. What hope is there, in such a situation, of developing consistent personalities who are free to act, through all relationships, according to principles inalienably their own?

Many men make of their business a kind of religion. Jesus, himself, has been portrayed as a genius in the use of modern selling methods for the salvation of mankind. Such interpreters, however, have closed their eyes to that supreme act of the Nazarene which is perhaps the most unbusiness-like event in history; namely, that he lay down his life rather than allow it to be funneled through the institutional habits of his time. Business, like any other institutional activity, consists of habits which are,

functionally, only parts of individuals. Kindness can be shown by an individual as a whole and integrated personality, but not by these routine and segmental habits alone. Business is not service; it is merely business. Service is a thing that can only be rendered by one living creature to another. It is something which relates neither to costs, to dividends, to machines, nor to organizations. It has no meaning except in terms of the values, needs, and sacrifices of a human life. The good which accrues from business activities when such pursuits are divorced from other interests of personalities is, therefore, fortuitous. It may be balanced by equivalent evil when the wheel of fortune makes another turn. The only religion which is constant and dependable, the only character which may claim service for its consistent, guiding motive, is to be found in men and women who are superior not only to their business habits, but to their other institutions as well.

## VII

The funneling tendency of modern business has invaded also our tastes and personal habits. Even advertisers themselves have recognized some of the obligations which rest upon their shoulders by virtue of this fact. Taking steps toward a reconsideration of their ethics, they have produced new types of appeal which they regard as possessing superior educational value. A certain tobacco advertiser, for example, has portrayed the trim, athletic figure of a young woman in a bathing costume, whose shadow, thrown in the background, takes the form of a monstrous female with a double chin. The reader is advised, "when tempted to over-indulge," to reach for a certain brand of cigarette. In advertisements of this character some would claim that the salesman has hit upon a method of stimulating business while at the same time dealing a severe blow to the growing evils of gluttony and obesity. Perhaps so, but there are other matters to consider. What, for instance, can be said of the intelligence of men and women who rely for guidance in their personal habits upon appeals of this sort? The cigarette makers have employed the useful psychological principle of substitution; but is the behavior into which they redirect us much better than our previous vice? Upon the logic



of reaching for tobacco whenever one is about to over-eat, the gourmand must conquer his habit by becoming a cigarette fiend. This method is like that of a mother who attempts to break a bad habit in her child by distracting his attention with some new toy just as he is about to perform the forbidden act. Nothing is said about building up a habit of self-control, of placing a value upon one's body for its own sake, or of living a well-balanced and orderly life.

This criticism holds for a large proportion of modern business appeals. The channels into which advertisers would sublimate human vices have principally to do not with the self-direction of the individual, but with the purchase of manufactured articles. Since an advertiser is primarily not concerned with values of personalities, but only with consumptive satisfactions, he can never transcend this limitation. A former President of the United States has to his credit the epigram that "advertising ministers to the spiritual side of trade." Whether this be true or not, it certainly does not minister to the spiritual side of human beings. Its specialists aim, no doubt, toward a certain ethical advancement; but it is a lame and halting morality when compared with what might be achieved if we were to set the stage not for economic institutions, but for the building of characters.

Latter-day advertising often goes beyond the exploitation of a specific product and appeals for the wider use of products of a certain general class. Here again, a certain good may be accomplished, as in the encouraging of a greater popularity of the tooth-brush. As these appeals multiply, however, they make increasing inroads upon the freedom of individuals to direct their own lives. In the earlier days we were informed that the Eureka Tailoring Company was the best place to go when you wanted to buy new clothing. Assuming that we obeyed the suggestions of all advertising implicitly, our freedom of action, in this case, was limited only after we had made up our minds to buy a new suit. But nowadays (I quote an advertisement before me) one reads: "Look the part of a correctly attired man of the hour. Fine appearance pays fine dividends." There follows the name of the tailor through whom one is to consummate this indispensable

sartorial perfection. This time the reader is controlled not only in his choice of a particular tailor, but in regard to the frequency with which he must patronize tailors in general. That portion of his life concerned with clothing has been made to adhere to a pattern which has been set, not by himself, but by the clothiers and advertisers. It is by making great numbers of people forego their individuality and behave in exactly the same manner that the captains of business enterprise fulfill their mission. In setting the stage for business prosperity they would abolish the scene in which we can reveal ourselves as individuals.

### VIII

That a review of the funneling tendency characterizing modern institutions should seem to apply so directly and so adversely to business is an impression which could scarcely have been avoided. For life today has become organized about economic and industrial motives. We are allowing our interest in art, in science, in philosophy, in morals, in religion, and in social intercourse to be canalized through the aim of business promotion. It is primarily men of commercial outlook whom we have permitted to come into positions of the highest power and to wield, through government as well as through trade, an unrivalled authority over our lives. These leaders, under the aegis of material prosperity, are busily entrenching the system still more firmly in our daily habits. But in spite of all this, it is not industry and commerce in themselves which are the objects of my criticism. If business were a limited vocation like that of the doctor, the lawyer, the teacher, or the mechanic,—if it were (as it might be) a work merely of production and exchange—it would probably never have led to the evils we are here attacking. The task of making, transporting, and distributing needed commodities is surely not opposed, through any inner necessity, to a complete and balanced life. Nor have business men, so far as we know, any weaker desire or any smaller capacity for such a life than others. Institutional habits are in themselves neither good nor bad; they become so only through the part they play in the life of the entire individual. Business is a menace only when business men over-step the duty

of supplying genuine needs and launch out on an enterprise, or game, for private enrichment and the accumulation of capital. For business then becomes a funnel through which all other human interests must flow.

Every civilization since history began seems to have been characterized by some particular institutional emphasis. The accentuation of some system of political, religious, or cultural habits has marked the trend of the times, and has characterized not only the achievements of the civilization in question, but its besetting limitations as well. So conspicuous has been this trend in past epochs that a student of history, unless he is careful, is likely to mistake it for the complete lives of the men and women concerned. We are prone to confuse the uniform, outer aspect, the 'shell of society,' with the manifoldness and diversity of individual human life. The pyramids of Egypt stand as the last grim tokens of an age in which all life was made to center about the greatness of the Pharaohs. How many realities of the lives of common men and women were crushed and buried beneath these gigantic symbols of royal power! Today we erect skyscrapers, the monuments of our prowess in business. In building them we are more humane than the Pharaohs: we employ wage laborers rather than slaves; we use machinery, instead of human shoulders, to bear the heavier burdens. But do these modern structures not betray the narrowing of life through a single institutional channel as truly as did the monuments of old? Have we not merely changed our political rulers for the sovereigns of an economic order? The Romans subjugated a large part of the known world and established tax-paying, military service, and slave labor in order to enhance the glory of the Imperial City. Our present leaders are exploiting our habit of paying tribute, at the cost of other values, to the success of business enterprises. In the Middle Ages life centered largely about the pursuits of organized religion. Men were under the influence of their own pious habits and of the ecclesiastics whom they called the Church. As monuments to these habits, and at the cost of severe toil and privation, cathedrals of incredible magnificence arose. We too build

cathedrals. Our edifices, however, are a tribute not to the work of hands devoted lovingly to religion, but to the marvels of modern technologists and the philanthropy of our business leaders. As for creative architectural genius and the aesthetic motive in religion, we are for the most part sterile; we merely copy the masterpieces of centuries past. But we understand the use of materials, the art of machinery, and the economy of human effort far better than the workmen of that earlier day. Whereas the mediaeval builders subordinated their economic interest to their religious feeling, we today have expressed the religious motive through the channel of the economic. Our own age, therefore, is no exception to the rule. In every period men have built up systems of institutional habits and stereotyped social values, through which, at the expense of individual self-expression, they have sought to attain the ideal life.

The glory of Egypt now lies buried in its tombs. Rome is no longer a word to strike terror in the hearts of men. Cathedrals of the Middle Ages are still with us, but the life from which they sprang has vanished; and the power of popes and emperors is ebbing away. Men and women, struggling always toward a freedom to live as individuals, have burst aside every barrier which their zeal for institutions has imposed. But after each release they have sunk back into the same error. At every turn of the wheel of civilization they have set forth anew, only to succumb again to the funneling of their lives through some new channel. Just as warring dynasties and prelates have given way to the founders of political nationhood, just as these in turn have yielded to the captains of industry, so our present leaders will no doubt pass away; and the search for the good life will begin once more. Sooner, perhaps, than we expect, the day may come when we must choose our course anew, when we can break through the restraints of the present order and build a civilization in which the values of individuals, rather than those ascribed to out-worn institutions, will prevail. What then? Will there arise some grim edict of fate compelling us to re-enact the ancient cycle? Must the wheel turn once more from the freedom of individuals to the

rigidity of a social pattern? Before we begin our planning for reconstruction, before we pin our faith upon some great, new funneling institution for the future, can we not pause and question whether, in the onward stream of life, we are obliged to set up any funnel at all?

---

---

## XIII

### THE COMING ERA OF LEISURE

---

---

LOOKING OUT OF my window on Tuesday mornings, I see a little procession of men with dusty aprons marching down the street beside a truck laden with ashes. They are a riotous crew, exchanging loud banter as they drag out my ash-tins, dump them, and return them ostentatiously and with loud reverberations to my doorstep. The can is not laboriously lifted but is thrown and caught, and its contents skillfully distributed, with one series of dextrous movements. A spirited team-work pervades the performance. Here are rhythm, bodily exercise, coöperation, rivalry, display, and even a little of the spice of hazard; while through it all runs the worker's ancient prerogative of airing his reflections as well as his grievances upon life at large.

As they disappear down the street there flashes before me a vision of the oil heater, recently installed in my neighbor's cellar. I see oil heaters replacing furnaces in many homes. I think of the time when I, too, may have one of these modern conveniences. I see myself sitting in my chair free from the worry and perspiration of the daily struggle with my furnace. I am richer every day by a quarter of an hour. Then there comes the picture of the leader of the ash-brigade piloting a lonely oil truck from house to house. Other members of the crew I see toiling in foundries where there is no time to talk and little possibility of hearing words which are uttered. They are running machines for making oil burners, tending oil drills, or switching tank cars, their movements responding not to those of their fellows, but to the revolutions of the machinery. I do not see them working long, however, at these tasks. They go off, instead, for hours of golden leisure. What will they be doing with their golden hours? What shall I be doing with my fifteen minutes? Shall we be any wiser, better, or happier than upon this Tuesday morning when the ash truck rumbles down my street?

I have talked with students of economics on the subject of modern business methods. They argue that a rapid circulation of goods and money means prosperity. Augmented production and sales bring increased returns from industry, employment for all, higher wages, and larger salaries. The purchasing power of the public is thereby enhanced and still greater business is called for. By this merry circle production and consumption are believed to pursue each other up the spiral stairway of human happiness. I remonstrate that I do not quite see the point of this; for it seems to me merely a case of making everyone work harder and faster. We are sacrificing our comfort to a needless economic urge.

Not so, reply my economic informants. They then explain how with labor-saving machinery and methods of organization the work of the world is being done more quickly and easily every day. The long, tedious hours of the sweat shop are rapidly becoming things of the past. In coming generations the day's work will be done in two or three hours, and the rest of the workers' time will be given to recreation, to travel, to the humane arts, and to the enjoyment of life generally. The acceleration of business and industry will produce an era of ennobling leisure.

My doubts, alas, remain. But before we can either accept or reject this doctrine, we must define more sharply some of the issues which it raises. Let us concede at once that there are many beneficent aspects of our present highly mechanized civilization. The relief of housewives and farmers from the heavier drudgery of yesterday is a service for which we cannot be too grateful. The work of scientists is also rendering men's bodies secure from disease and is safeguarding their animals and their crops. We now know how to combat many of the hardships which made the lives of our forefathers a precarious and often an unequal struggle. Whatever may be our final verdict regarding the machine, in whatever direction we may change and refocus our efforts, we shall probably never wish to return to that primitive scene. The solution of our present problems will not be a reaction to the illusion of a golden past.

The true issue calls for a critical survey of what we have, keeping the benefits, rejecting the dross, and working out a policy

for a directed, rather than a fortuitous, development. Fundamental to this problem are two contrasting theories of leisure. According to the first of these, which I shall call the *biological* theory, work and play cannot be sharply separated. Leisure is not so much a time of freedom from the tasks we have to do, but the lighter and more enjoyable aspects of those tasks. Advocates of biological leisure are interested in increasing not the amount of time in which our bodies shall be free from all productive labor, but rather the enjoyment of productive activities themselves, once they are released from strain, monotony, accident, and disease. Hence an advocate of biological leisure would use machinery and applied science not primarily to replace human work, but to render the organism as it performs its tasks more healthy and secure. He aims for a wholesome balance between expenditure of energy and the variety, rest, and recreation necessary to keep the organism fit. His goal is not more efficient machinery, but more efficient men and women; and by this he means greater efficiency not for their employers, but for themselves.

The other conception of leisure, on the contrary, is that the routine labor of life has always been a kind of necessary evil. It is, at best, uninspiring, drudging, and monotonous. The smaller, therefore, the compass to which it can be compressed, the freer we shall be for more interesting pursuits. Work and play dwell, in this view, in different spheres. The commonplace labors of life must be done for us, otherwise the nobler achievements can never be gained. We shall soon approach the day, the advocates of this theory believe, when a few hours (or perhaps minutes) per day given over to the running of machines ought to satisfy all biological needs; and the rest of our time will be our own. I shall call this view the *technological* theory of leisure.

Upon the biological theory, leisure is to be earned and paid for as we go. The enjoyment of a period of rest as we survey a garden well tilled is, in this view, dependent in considerable measure upon the labor we have gone through in tilling it. The vista from the summit of a mountain cannot be separated from the exhilaration of the climb. The pleasures of life come to us in and through the bodily exercise and adjustment upon which we, as organisms, de-



pend, just as we appreciate more deeply the rose because we must guard against the thorn. The proponents of the technological theory, on the other hand, are more enamored of progress. Why, they say, should a man be content with a view of his little garden when he can walk about vast acreages tilled for him by tractors and harvested by machinery? Why take the trouble of an arduous climb when, with our automobiles, we can comfortably visit as many mountains in a week as we used to visit in a year? If a view from a mountain top is good, then a view from two, three, or a hundred mountain tops is better. We do not have to pay for our leisure as we go; we can, through the invention of machinery, pay for it in advance. The day when men have to be burdened with the labor of making a living is rapidly passing. We can have the rose without the thorn.

## II

Concerning the theory of biological leisure little more needs to be said. The program through which it is to be actualized is clearly before us. We still need research in hygiene, disease prevention, we need de-centralization of industry, the elimination of the fatigue and the din of urban life, the discovery of an intelligent manner of distributing the world's goods, and the disbanding of nations as armed, sovereign powers. All this, however, is related to native human desires, to the aiding of the biological functions natural to men and women. It has little to do with the technological program of leisure, a plan which aims far beyond the making of a life of work livable and happy, to the elimination of work itself. The technological theory rests, instead, upon the blind faith that every effort-saving machine which can be invented and marketed brings us so much nearer to the millennium. It is this latter theory which I propose to challenge.

First, however, let us inquire how certain technological enthusiasts are aiming to carry out their plan. Notwithstanding the talk which one hears nowadays about social planning, most technological advocates still seem to cling to the formula that the goal is to be reached through the free play of business enterprise in stimulating invention.

There would be little question of our attaining sufficient

mastery of nature to be free from toil the greater part of the day if only inventions and manufactures were limited to those which are really fundamental. If everyone could be paid directly and amply in food, clothing, and shelter in exchange for his share in running the machines which produced these commodities, and without the intervention of monetary wages and the possibility of overproduction and disastrous unemployment, there would be abundant and happy leisure for all. Leisure would flow directly from and be closely related to work. But our present conception of progress seems to be of a different character. It is generally business, as well as leisure, which we are seeking. Whereas an exponent of biological leisure is content to take the rewards of industrial machines directly, a technological enthusiast prefers to take them in money. For money means increased manufacturing, more business, higher wages and salaries, and therefore (as he thinks) greater ultimate leisure for all. The only flaw in the program is that money can create not only more leisure but a condition of diminished leisure, according to the way in which it is used. New products of industry stimulate new desires, create a more elaborate standard of living, and arouse a struggle for economic prestige and consumptive rivalry. Inventions and production are thus accelerated in turn, and the vicious circle leads us away from the goal of leisure toward that of bigger business. Most men were probably pleased at the time saved for them by the invention of the safety razor, in that it freed them from long waits in the barber shops or encounters with the whetstone. But a thorough-going technological leisurist would have us scrap all our present safety razors. He would have us now purchase a new type which will save us ten seconds more by allowing us to clean it without taking it apart. Harvesters and threshing machines have eliminated many a hot, weary hour with the scythe and flail. But with millions of men unemployed and the grain market flooded, we are expected to be enthusiastic over *super*-harvesters which take over all the wheat-gathering operations previously performed by human hands.

Aside from the lack of economy of such a scheme, a tension and excitement are produced which are the opposite of the mood of leisure. If business is to be accelerated to the point where the

machines will replace almost the entire labor of the human race, a high level of commercial stimulation must be maintained. Were our salesmen to abate their activities, we should slump back to the purchase of necessities only, or of a few of the simpler luxuries, business would suffer, and the whole march toward the final conquest of nature would be halted. Working with so much at stake in investments and large orders, business people inevitably become nervous. Depressions, which seem bound to occur, are sources of worry; while the hours of idleness which follow are not periods of constructive leisure, but of unemployment with its accompanying poverty and despair. We must, therefore, goad ourselves to such a point that, when the time comes to enjoy the leisure we have earned, we are too weary for any but the most trivial pursuits. The recreations of the "tired business man" have become a proverbial expression for the banal.

In order to learn how to spend leisure time we must first get ourselves into a leisurely attitude. Mr. Sinclair Lewis has vividly pictured the struggle of a man to solve, in the rush of business life, a problem for which only a long period of tranquil reflection would have sufficed. Babbitt, being troubled in conscience by certain of his moral lapses, has dropped in to secure spiritual comfort and intercession from his pastor. We see this bustling clergyman as he kneels beside the penitent in energetic prayer, while from between his fingers he keeps an eye upon his watch so that he will not miss an important engagement. Needless to say, the sinner emerged from this encounter with no true insight and with no solution. For the joy and contentment which we hope to gain through leisure time there must likewise be more than a posture adopted on the moment. There must not be glances from between our fingers at the piling up of profits, but a steadfast gaze and a singleness of purpose. Unless the seeker for universal leisure can contrive some other method than the acceleration of business enterprise, his hope of finding it is likely to be an idle dream.

### III

There arises also the problem of how a technological leisure, if it were forthcoming, could be spent. Unless that ruthless destruction which has so far seemed indispensable to our indus-

trial program can be checked, by the time we arrive at the goal there will be practically no environment remaining in which free time can be profitably spent. Consider, for example, those primordial human enjoyments, the fellowship with nature and the love of sport. There will still be preserved the mountains and the sea, and probably also the spectacular forests, canyons, and waterfalls of our national reserves. But the local woods and streams, the farms and villages which have been the charm of the countryside for those who cannot travel afar, will be largely despoiled and depopulated through industry. Wild birds and animals are now being destroyed or driven away by growing towns and by the increase of automobiles. Concrete highways, though affording a fleeting view of the country to many motorists, have injured the beauty of the country itself. Just as walking has given way to less healthful motoring, so rowing and canoeing are succumbing to the noisy, more thrilling speed boat. Great cities, the homes, we are told, of our future civilization, have displaced unnumbered possibilities for the pursuits of leisure. With the entire seaboard available, millions of city-dwellers must snatch their respite upon a shore as congested as a city street, from which they must return in stifling subways to be buried again where no sight or sound of nature can reach them. In riding along metropolitan elevateds one can see wisps of cherished vegetation hanging from the fire-escapes of hundreds of upper story tenements. Such are the materials for leisure left by a civilization through which leisure itself is to come to pass.

Educational trends in schools and colleges, drifting away from the pure sciences and the liberal arts, are moving in the direction of technical and vocational training. We are training our young people increasingly for that residuum of supervision of machines which is to remain when the goal is reached; but we are neglecting our major responsibility of training for leisure itself. Music and the drama are also suffering in character of popular participation, if not in extent. Mechanized production and transmission are eliminating the practicability of music as a common profession. The sensational talking motion picture has taken the place of the art of genuine drama, and has replaced troops of actors by the mass production of their sounds and shadows. Thus far

the milieu of the technological era has been able to yield scarcely any authentic artistic productions except those of protest directed against the age itself. In our most vigorous drama we are going back to a pre-technological folk culture for our setting.

The same deplorable changes may be noted in social intercourse. Conversations, neighborhood visits, family outings, entertainments at home, sewing circles, literary clubs, and even the well-worn chairs for loungers at the country store were all occasions and places for the enjoyment of yesterday's leisure moments. But in our drive toward technological leisure we have now become too busy to keep up these old contacts. On the highway we used to meet men and women. Whether on foot, on horseback, in buggies, or even on bicycles, it was always *persons* whom we encountered. Now we do not meet individuals, but automobiles (and tomorrow, airplanes)—grim, impersonal machines which we try to crowd past, unmindful of our fellow-being concealed behind the glass and metal. Courtesies and amenities, though natural between men, are lost upon machines. Even such social life as we have preserved has been despoiled of much of its earlier value. Through a strange irony, it was a salesman who told me that he dreaded to go to a certain large city, because while there it would be impossible for him to have any friends. If anyone were to take an interest in him he would at once suspect that that person was trying to sell him something. The decline of social relationships in the broader sense holds true also for family life. Formerly it was unusual to have to seek one's fortune away from the locality in which one was reared. Today it is not the family location which determines the place of residence, but the possibility of obtaining a job or of discovering some new field for business enterprise.

The preceding picture, it is true, is highly generalized, and the reader will speedily point to exceptions. Nevertheless, the basic trends of the technological era are those described. If it is necessary, in order to reach our goal, to continue to put technological progress ahead of every other consideration, there will be left scarcely any resources through which our millennium of leisure can be happily spent. We shall have lost not only our work but

our play as well. We shall have become strangers to the materials of leisure.

#### IV

There is, however, a more fundamental weakness in the theory of technological leisure than the threatened decline of its material resources. For in addition to these, certain inner, psychological requirements must be met. Under a system requiring only one or two hours of work per day the meaning of life itself is bound to alter. Impelling interests which formerly actuated human conduct will be lost. There will be imperiled not merely the things to use in leisure time, but the motives also for using them.

The apostles of enterprise at once object that this would probably not be true. We cannot foretell, they say, what new vision human beings may acquire and what pursuits they may find when once they are liberated from the bondage of toil. Perhaps; but one who bases a social policy upon such a promise carries on his shoulders, it seems to me, a considerable burden of proof. When pressed for some suggestion as to what our future interests may be, a technologist has only vague phrases, such as the cultivation of the higher, nobler, or more creative portions of our natures. He does not show how such a development is to take place. History thus far has not shown that as men emerge into a new era of culture there appears a new set of fundamental purposes or values. Art goes back to the cave-dwellers and is practically universal among primitive peoples. Curiosity concerning nature is reflected in the many mythological cults which preceded the development of science. Religion and altruistic motives are probably as old as the race. There seems to be no tribe of men, however primitive, who do not give a portion of their time to athletic sports and social intercourse. The degree of cultural advancement of any age naturally determines the way in which these interests are followed; but the interests and motives themselves are a part of man's unchanging natural endowment.

But why, ask the advocates of technology, can these basic enjoyments not be preserved? Why should they not flourish even better in an age of perfect leisure?

Let us try to imagine what the pursuit of men's traditional leisure interests would be like in the age of their complete emancipation from work. First, as to the enjoyment of nature: suppose that in the hours which are to be entirely our own we should leave our model apartments, kitchen-aids, and perfect plumbing, and hie ourselves to the open country, the woods, and the mountains. The question arises what we should do in such places. Suppose that we took along our mechanical equipment and carried on our perfect existence while sitting under the trees, or in our automobiles or yachts. In this case we should have no really participating enjoyment of nature; we would be simply moving our technological living to a different spot. If, on the other hand, we should give up all our mechanical servants and meet the environment with only our hands and a few simple tools, we should be experiencing nature deeply and intimately; but our leisure would be getting us into no end of trouble with the civilization which we had temporarily left but through which our leisure is to be subsidized. We could not, as a population, live on food raised in our primitive gardens, nor upon the fish or game which we might catch; for that would throw out of gear the system of marketing, mass production and exchange upon which technological leisure must depend. We should be committing the heresy, or indeed the treason, of going to work. Furthermore, as we became enamored of the crude life and its simple implements, the mechanical complexities of the machine age would seem irrelevant, if not actually contradictory, to our newly chosen life. The highest perfection in plumbing would not seem so important when the larger portion of our time would be enjoyed without any plumbing at all. Under such conditions we should find ourselves relinquishing the passive, technological existence and going back, of our own accord, to an active leisure of the sort which I have called biological.

Although admitting that an informal intimacy with nature would be somewhat handicapped by the ultimate machine age, technologists might point to the study of nature itself as a logical interest for the leisure of the future. We live, they observe, in the age of science; and our mechanical genius will endow us with ever keener instruments for opening up worlds of which we

have not yet dreamed. But here again some troubling doubts arise. A technologist who speaks in these terms is mistaken regarding our era. This is not properly an age of science at all, in the sense of a popular and disinterested love of studying nature. It is, rather, an age of engineering and invention. There is little tendency in modern technology to direct popular interest toward the investigation of natural laws for the love of that study itself, but only for the application of those laws to the processes of industry. But granting that the scientific attitude be fostered, what widespread opportunity for the study of nature will remain in that era when we shall have lost touch, in our daily living, with nature itself? What starting point can be found amid the world of metal and concrete which we have interposed between the seeker and that untouched flow of natural events in which alone the universe can be encountered? Franklin could not have flown his kite on Sixth Avenue; nor could Newton have fathomed the universal principle of gravitation through watching elevators go up and down. The universe of the scientist, so far as the experience of modern city-dwellers is concerned, is becoming the curiosity shop of a bygone day. In exploiting nature for profit we have destroyed the laboratory in which nature can be found. It is useless to argue that we have had our Newton and our Franklin when the world was simpler, and that we do not need them now. There are probably undreamed-of discoveries still awaiting us for which we need the imagination, training, and zeal which direct contact with nature alone can give. Our children, the scientists of the future, must have this environment if the love of scientific investigation is to survive.

As with science so it will be with the fine arts. Passive reception of music is of course facilitated by the radio. But for a vital participation we need to do more than merely to submit ourselves to the mechanical transmission of sounds. We shall need to have recourse again to the simple instruments of the pre-technological age. Should we, return to singing, to the piano and the violin, as we must if music is to become our occupation and not our plaything, there will have to be a shift of emphasis from our present preoccupation with technologically transmitted



sound. In painting and literature there will remain, in an age of perfect mechanical adjustment, the possibility of beauty of sight and sound; but it is likely to be the beauty of pure sensationalism or the striving for the bizarre, for a fundamental part of the subject matter of these arts will have disappeared. The struggles arising from human efforts toward biological adaptation have inspired masterpieces in word and picture throughout the history of mankind. In an age of secure and effortless leisure such art, apart from its antiquarian interest, will be seen no more.

Social relationships, likewise, will become barren of much of their earlier interest. Individuals will be sharers in one another's thrills. There will still be the excitement of rivalry, and between the sexes, erotic stimulation. The joy of laboring and striving together, however, will have faded. There will be little interest remaining in the problems of men and women; for there will be no problems, except perhaps those of a psychological and spiritual sort, and here the need may be so great and universal that there will be no way out. In journeying about there will be little to see, because the bringing about of a mechanically perfect adjustment will have standardized the cultures of all peoples. Travel will be reduced to a process of hurtling through space. Religion and philosophy, in an age of mastery of material things, will be likely to take on a character suggestive of the self-satisfaction of their participants. An arrogant humanism may reign in our intellectual life, driving out the humble inquiry, resignation, and fortitude which have enriched great personalities of the past.

The acceleration of invention up to the point where all things shall have been placed under man's feet may involve, therefore, a destruction of more than the materials of leisure. It will probably remove from life the very interests which vitalize and enrich experience. The so-called higher, or creative, forms of expression, our intellectual, moral, and aesthetic pursuits are, after all, rooted in the full biological experience of human kind. We cannot abstract them from that reality and pursue them upon Olympus, while giving over to mechanical contrivances the struggle for many of the very meanings by which the arts are nourished.

## V

But let us turn from specific interests to the psychological nature of interest itself. There are at the beginning of life no manifest tendencies toward the higher culture. Newborn babies apparently do not philosophize or mold their confused world into images of the beautiful. Theirs are passive, perhaps wondering, impressions; and their earliest acts are of a purely biological sort. They whine and mouth their fingers when hungry; they cry with colic, and writhe and struggle against an annoying safety pin or an oppressive blanket. Their sole aesthetic pleasure, if such it could be called, seems to lie in being tickled. Upon these simple, though on the whole useful, reflexes there is gradually built up a series of complex habits. A child not only cries when hungry but learns to coax for food in a particular way, and to manipulate his nursing bottle. These acts, a primitive sort of work, become suffused for him with interest because they are connected with the satisfaction of an elemental want, with the direct sustenance of life. Later he learns to ask for food in words, and to secure by that method the fulfillment of his other creature wants as well. Walking, running, climbing, constructing, and later learning a trade or profession are also activities which, at different stages, arouse his insatiable interest, because they too arise as a development by exercise of the native biological tendencies of infancy. The process is, of course, more complicated than I have described, and individual peculiarities of talent also enter in. But this much is clear: a primary reason why our characteristic activities are acquired, and why they retain throughout life their absorbing interest, is because they are grounded, both originally and continuously, in satisfactions which are the very laws of organic life. Without this principle of learning through continuous adaptation it would be hard to imagine what the interests of living creatures would be like, or whether, indeed, their life would have any content at all.

Now it is the proposal of technological leisurists to undermine all this process of learning and acquiring interests by satisfying all organic needs in advance and with only a minimum of rou-

time action upon the part of the individual. Such learning and work as will be required will be of a listless, stereotyped sort, unrelated to the biological structure or the emotional equipment of the worker. Work will require only the repetitive running of machines and not the continuous and increasing development of bodily skills. Its pattern will be laid down by another, not planned for ourselves. Except for the few contrivers of remaining inventions it will offer no stimulus of social recognition. There will be little likelihood of developing the natural gifts which are peculiar to individuals; for a system which runs with perfect precision can be no respecter of persons. Considered as a means of developing human potentialities, the life-supporting work of the world will have to be written off as a total loss.

But worse than that, since work, through its connection with organic adjustment, is the primary activity through which interest can be elicited, its separation from the rest of life would leave the organism listless and cold. It would not merely destroy the possibility of special lines of interest, but would threaten the experience of interest itself. The spoon-feeding sometimes practiced upon the children of wealthy parents, resulting in aimless boredom, would then be extended to humanity at large. We should be like children for whom have been provided a corps of mechanical servants even more prompt and efficient than misguided parents; we should be in danger of becoming a race of morons well fitted to enjoy the age of perfect labor-saving machines.

The goal of the elimination of labor, or the separation of it from the so-called higher activities is, as a working philosophy, fundamentally wrong. Its fallacy lies in the assumption that, by sheer inventive genius, men can rise to heights in which they will be more than, or at least different from, men. In trying to conquer nature about us we are on the verge of denying our own nature.

A confirmed champion of technological leisure will doubtless hedge a little and will say that there is no use in going to such extremes. No one intends, he will say, to thwart or deny human nature, but only to free it from its present handicaps, and to give men's ingenuity a chance for unhampered progress. Why worry, he will argue, about such a distant and fanciful outcome while

there is now so much to be done to make life even tolerable? But this reply is disingenuous and lacking in insight. In saying that in working for the complete control of nature by machines he wishes only to make our present life more livable, he is begging the question and trying to slip over to the biological position. He cannot so easily evade the fact that it is technological and not biological leisure which he has been espousing. And one who advocates a policy which, when made thorough-going, will land us in a morass, takes upon himself the responsibility of caution. I do not fear the immediate biological degeneration of the race. There is still interesting physical work in the world to do and probably will be for some time to come. But I am deeply concerned about the unscrupulous advertising, as a justification for present business and technological methods, of an ideal which, when fully realized, would mean the destruction of that which life holds dear. This, it seems to me, is the impelling reason for looking ahead at the logical, even though distant, outcome of the technological leisurists' program.

## VI

We have spoken thus far as if the development of machinery for supplanting human effort would rob life of all its interests. While this prediction seems justified for our present creative pursuits, it is not accurate in its most sweeping sense. There would remain a certain class of pleasures of whose consummation the present is already giving some hint. These interests lie in speed and power, not the power of our physical bodies but of our servants, the machines. There might be the excitement also of competition for profits and perhaps for recognition as inventors or wielders of new sources of power. We should multiply also the kaleidoscopic sensations which our present mechanical devices for amusement and recreation afford. But life in a machine age, to use Mr. Stuart Chase's expression, is tenuous. An earthquake, a bomb dropped in a city's water main, a strike of operators of a food-transporting or other vital public service may plunge a vast population into panic, misery, or destruction. War, under modern conditions, holds a threat more terrible than ever before. Without in the least assuring ourselves of the diminution of our human

likelihood of provoking a conflict, we are encouraging the invention of the means of destroying life upon an ever increasing scale. Tenuousness, however, is not the production of the machine age alone. It existed in ancient Greece and Rome, and will exist wherever the power of biological adaptation of individuals is delegated to other agencies, whether these agencies be other individuals in the capacity of slaves, or machines. Just as the Greeks were conquered by the Romans and Rome, in turn, was sacked by barbarians, so our civilization, too, may disappear through some cataclysm of that nature which we are now trying contemptuously to subdue. Machinery can adjust us adequately to the ordinary routine of events; but only biological organisms of an independent, vigorous, and resourceful type, have the power of weathering nature's sudden and critical changes. Having discarded our humbler habits of organic adaptation, we are in danger of losing our plasticity in the face of a rapidly changing environment. We shall find ourselves with neither the resources nor the philosophy to weather the catastrophes which may lie just ahead.

## VII

Here, then, are the two ideals of leisure. The biological method, familiar to us in the past, is slow, humble, effortful, and compliant with nature rather than ascendant over it. The technological program, proposed for the future, is heroic and imperious toward nature. An advocate of the one prospect offers the immediate enjoyments of nature; an advocate of the other lays before us the pleasures fabricated by the machine. The one invites us to a participation in the creation of beauty; the other pours upon our senses a flood of variegated, though sometimes beautiful, sensations. The one encourages reflection and knowledge for its own sake; the other standardizes intellectual training for practical ends. The one gives us science, the other technology. We mingle, upon the one hand, with whole personalities living in face to face communities; while upon the other we are involved in powerful, impersonal organizations and meet our fellows only in those segmental and specialized relationships into which life has been divided. In biological leisure sport has meant the development of

the body through the movement of its parts. The sport of the machine age means the movement of the body as a whole through space. The one is concerned with the acquisition of the strength and skill of our bodies, the other with the power and intricacy of our machinery. Participation in biological leisure develops interests bound up with the satisfaction of organic needs, a leisure integrated with life. Technological leisure tends toward external pleasures detached from life as biologically conceived. The one road has brought successive generations of men from infancy to their estate as learning and thinking creatures, and has given a zest to those vital activities for which we are organically endowed. The other forsakes this struggle for adaptation and leads us into an environment where human lives have little chance of showing themselves as anything different from mechanical patterns of events. The one method has developed individuals, the other machines. The one plan, though commonplace, is tried and sure. The other abounds in high adventure; but its advocates must assume our ability to become more than men, and must stake our entire security upon that one magnificent but perilous wager.

Some may think the council of clinging stubbornly to the old ideal of biological leisure is too conservative. Perhaps the technological leisurists were right in assuring us that there are unknown realms ahead into which the human spirit may soar, once we have cast aside our limitations. But are the champions of modern industry and invention ready to assume the responsibility for this outcome? Can they give us any inkling of what the newer humanity will be like? In spite of the cocksureness of many of our industrial leaders, I do not believe that they have even begun to face the problem intelligently. Their threadbare slogan, "training for leisure time," shows that they still regard the matter merely as the filling in of an idle period. The notion that, by the aid of night classes and adult extension courses, they can, from their present perspective, train workers for this unknown leisure is purely gratuitous. Having put vacant time into life, they imagine that they can put life back into the vacancy they have created. But it will not be a question merely of finding new occupations

to fill the free spaces in life as we now know it. We must discover what this new life will be for the sake of which our leisure shall have been won. In spite of the astonishing advances which we seem to be making in our culture, we have never yet been able to make any apparent alteration in the inherited biological factors to which this culture must somehow be adapted. The program which will remove human zeal from this biological context, carries with it, as long as men are human, a duty for its sponsors of providing some new setting, and of showing how we may still employ those emotional energies which throughout the ages have made life real and vital. A new purpose and style of living must be accomplished, a change so sweeping as to produce almost a new genus of mankind.

Granting that he is willing, is the one who announces himself as the prophet of the technological era able to take upon himself this burden? Has he himself acquired a magnificence of character and a set of values appropriate to a life emancipated from creature concerns? And most important of all, is he praying fervently and whole-heartedly for men's universal redemption; or is he glancing through his fingers at the mounting profits of the machines?

We stand already upon the threshold of that leisure whose glory and fulfillment are seen within our lives as natural beings. It is a leisure in which we can still feel kinship with that long line of earth's creatures of which we form a part. Shall we forsake this prospect for what may turn out to be a mirage in the desert, for a vision which may fade away as we approach, leaving only the hot sands over which we shall have toiled in vain?

---

---

## XIV

### THE DILEMMAS OF SOCIAL PLANNING

---

---

NOT LONG AGO I was driving in a second-hand Buick across western Germany. With me, as a guide, was an old friend born and raised in the country through which we were traveling, though now a citizen of the United States. In Frankfurt-am-Main and elsewhere we had seen evidences of the bitter conditions through which the inhabitants had long been struggling. And now, as we drove through the quaint, lovely country-side, with its trees blooming white in the spring sunshine, we felt, by contrast, a sense of deepening gloom that life among this great people could be so thwarted, so bereft of any vision of a better day. We had not gone far out of the city when we began to see bands of youths, some trudging along the highway, some flocking together on bicycles. Clean and strong they were, with the healthy glow which betokens a love of out-of-doors, their gaze directed ahead, and their faces sober, determined, almost tense. Where were they all going, and what was their mission? Though this was not clear, the look upon their faces and their earnestness of manner made one feel that here was the beginning of a mighty army, recruiting itself from little bands, and moving irresistibly toward its goal. As we passed troop after troop, I could see that my friend was becoming excited. There were beginning to stir in him those emotions of early childhood which center about the land in which one has been born. Suddenly a bend in the road brought us upon a large group cycling along in dead earnest, their ruddy limbs bare to the May breeze and their golden hair flying.

"There they go!" shouted my friend leaping to his feet and raising his clenched fist. "There are the lads who will save Germany!"

"What are they going to do?" I asked.

For a moment my companion hesitated. Then he spoke, almost between clenched teeth, with great emphasis.



"They are going to keep France and the other nations from killing this country."

"But how do they propose to go about it?" I persisted. "They are unarmed. And anyway, do they want to arm and fight again, to go all through that bloody nightmare which happened when they were babies, in the end to accomplish nothing, perhaps, but further oppression, more reparations, and deeper poverty? Who, or what, could they possibly overcome by fighting?"

"They could lick any country they chose!" said my companion, lapsing back into his seat with a sullen braggadocio which seemed scarcely to convince himself.

I then argued that, for all their enthusiasm, and their fine, courageous spirit, I could see nothing which these youthful crusaders could accomplish. Their difficulties were not due to international hatreds and misunderstandings alone. Quite apart from the French asperity, a world wide depression and a tangle of internal administrative problems were holding the people powerless. Out of these difficulties not even the wisest statesman, not Hitler himself, could see the way. What opportunity then for saving Germany was open to fair-haired youths, chanting their Nazi hymns, and making pilgrimages on bicycles. I could see that my friend too was perplexed. We drove along in silence. The *wandervögel* pedalled on—crusading armies hastening to battle with an invisible and intangible foe.

No, this is not a depression in which individual citizens count. The best they can do is to try to hold body and soul together until the leaders of their institutions can get things running again. Until then, they must munch their bread in silence, like manna sent from heaven, detached from the hand or the process which feeds them, the economic world having for them no more reality or substance than if it were a dream. Nor are individuals acting collectively in any better position. The protests of farmers blocking the roads, though dramatic, cannot touch the evils which have reduced them to such extremities. Armies of hunger marchers bringing petitions to governing bodies gain little more than hostile contempt. In Hyde Park, London, thousands of people congregate. Orators cast upon the night air their solutions of

the country's ills. Many also gather merely to sing—and they sing beautifully—as if to keep up their courage. But whether they protest or sing, the “black Maria” comes around in the morning to pick up the bodies of those who have crept under the bushes and died. Parliament meets, but men are still sleeping in newspapers along the Embankment.

The reason why individuals do not count during the depression is because they do not count much anyway in modern society. We are too highly organized; life is too complex. The fictitious organism we call the Great Society has replaced individuals; and ‘Society’s institutions and industries,’ rather than men and women, have become the working units which the leaders must foster and direct. When these agencies are working at full speed, individuals are comfortably fed, clothed, and housed. No one, therefore, realizes that they are lost. When the institutions, however, break down or are retarded, these creature necessities are wanting; and looking at the suffering about us we say that the depression has isolated individuals. The fact is, however, that the depression did not do it; they were lost all the time. It is only in the physical hardship of a depression that their abandonment becomes noticed.

This state of affairs, say most leaders, is inevitable in man’s onward march toward the mastery of his environment. We can never revert to the simple life of the past. Coöperation, organization, and control, they insist, have become the watchwords of civilization. The dangers involved cannot justify us in giving up these principles and going back to isolated individuals; it is up to us to make our organized coöperation successful. Our country today is like a great and inconceivably complex factory in which, as one expert has expressed it, “all the national personnel has to be put to work.” Such a task, in all its baffling complexities, is clearly not for the man on the street. Our outgrown theory of democracy will not work today. We must have a wise, experienced director at the helm, surrounded by a corps of highly trained specialists, each dealing with some phase of our complex problem. The one great need of the hour, proclaimed by spokesmen everywhere, is purposeful and intelligent social

planning. And in answer to this call a troop of expert planners, groomed in economics, statistics, engineering, and finance are coming forward laden with solutions.

## II

Through shortsighted policies of profits and wages, say the planners, we have neglected to keep the purchasing power of the masses up to a point which will allow them to consume the goods which our improved and accelerated methods have been able to provide. We have not over-produced; but we have failed to make our production minister to human welfare. We must therefore study more carefully the means of increasing consumption among all classes of the population; and to do this we must learn to coordinate supply and demand in a scientific, rather than a haphazard manner. High wages must be maintained by cutting the unit costs of manufacturing. Production must be regulated and absorbed by augmenting the purchasing power of workers and by a scrutiny of local needs and capacities to purchase. The evils of unemployment due to technological changes must be alleviated by unemployment insurance and by better departments of industrial personnel. Workers can thus be given continuous employment at a wage adequate not merely for bodily existence, but for a continually progressing standard of living. Social planners are enamored also of the modern ideal of technological progress. The day will soon arrive, they say, when all needs will be satisfied by machines with only a very small amount of routine human labor; all we need is some plan by which to use our great resources in a more socialized way. When we shall have accomplished this we shall reap not only security but the mastery of our environment and an abundant leisure for the finer things of life.

Although this program seems at first sight a promising one, certain misgivings arise when we begin to consider the tools with which our planner purposes to work. Naturally it is impossible for him to go back and shape all our economic activities anew. He is compelled, and resigned, to take the world pretty much as he finds it. Though he may modify somewhat the institutions of capital, mass-production, organization, profits, and wages, his

redirection of men's energies toward a better order must come about largely through these traditional agencies.

Now economic institutions have a hidden, two-fold character. The *primitive* rôle of production and exchange seems to have been simply the satisfaction of the biological needs and spontaneous personal desires of men. If a man who had caught a string of fish, but had no garden produce, wanted vegetables, he proceeded to barter some of his catch for garden truck which another man had produced. If he spent his time making beads or weapons, a hunter could usually be found who would supply him with food or skins for clothing in exchange for his primitive manufactures. In such a system a business man was a merchant trader. His function was merely that of carrying goods about, or setting up a store, so that individuals could find the things they needed at the time and place in which they were wanted. In its original character business was merely a device to facilitate the meeting of minds and hands with respect to mutual satisfactions. It was the human expression of a principle as old and universal as the animal kingdom, the law of *biological adjustment*.

Such a simple state of affairs, however, was not destined to remain. There became superimposed upon it the new pattern of the industrial revolution with its pecuniary capital, its factories, its credit, its machinery, its profits, wages, and dividends. Invention and mass-production entered the field, and the simple time and place function of the merchant trader gave way to pressure advertising and selling. There was opened to view the whole new and uncharted sea of commercial enterprise. The business man was now interested not merely in providing the needed bread and butter, but in continually *better* bread and butter, and more of it. Profits, rather than biological adaptation, became his motive. Business as something to work for in itself, as an institution to keep going independently of its role in the satisfaction of needs, came to occupy the thoughts and energies of men. The older and plainer function of business as biological adjustment was overlaid by a new ideal, namely, business as *economic adventure*.

Since, in an era of business as adventure, we no longer satisfy our needs through a direct, personal relationship of production

and exchange, but instead through the wages or profits of business organization, we are entirely dependent upon the continued operation of that system. The great bulk of financial transactions, as the technocrats have shown, are concerned not with such basic industries as agriculture, but with keeping the social system going. Instead of being well fed when the barns are full, and hungry when the crop fails, we are now well fed when business is thriving and starved when business is dull. The condition of the barns and warehouses seems to have relatively little to do with it. When business as adventure is accelerated we give no thought to its function as adjustment; for it is assumed that this function is automatically working through economic laws. When business is retarded we try to fall back upon the use of our system as one of purely biological adjustment. But we find that direct adjustment is no longer possible. We are equipped not for satisfying needs, but for commercial adventuring. We are organized for profits, not for use. Such is the confusion of the social planners with regard to the tools they are endeavoring to employ.

In order to clarify this confusion of functions, let us take a familiar illustration. Let us suppose, for the moment, that we are living in an era of business as mere adjustment. A certain woman of our acquaintance decides to change from wearing cotton hose to silk hose. Such a decision will be of no great significance to anyone but the woman herself; and even for her it will probably be of minor consequence only—a single detail of her personality as expressed in her attire. Her various other interests can be weighed to determine whether the possession of the silk hose will be worth the effort of making them or getting someone else to make them for her. This mere change of hosiery will certainly not jeopardize anyone's employment or livelihood, nor will it narrow anyone's range of satisfaction in life. A change from cotton to silk hosiery in our present economic system, however, is not so simple a matter. Since we have been taught by advertising and propaganda to react in great mass-like movements, such a shift, in our society, is likely to represent not so much an individual preference as a sweeping change in fashion. It is, in fact, a change which has occurred through the invention of a process for making cheap artificial silk, and has

been stimulated by the sales appeals of merchants and producers. Great sums of capital, however, have already been invested in plants and equipment for making the earlier, cotton product, and thousands of workers have come to depend for their livelihood upon its uninterrupted manufacture and sale. With the advent of the new fashion, all this machinery, organization, and hard-won skill are swept aside. Investors lose, salaried officials are reduced or dismissed, and workers, many of whom are trained for only this kind of employment, find themselves not only out of their present job, but unable to procure any other. The urge of business as adventure has swallowed up the function of business as adjustment, and has destroyed its fine and natural balance of values.

It should be noted that the event which precipitated this catastrophe was one which, in any reasonable system of human adjustment, would have scarcely created a ripple upon the surface of our economic life. It would have remained simply a change of individuals' texture preferences in one article of apparel. Yet upon this one slight shift has been made to depend, in our scheme of commercial adventuring, the entire well-being, happiness, and security of men and women. The whole individual, with purposes, interests, and a destiny for transcending his rôle in the factory which employs him, is sacrificed to the exploitation of a single behavior segment. This is the penalty we pay for assuming that the economics of business adventure, in which individuals are neglected, will automatically care for our vital need of biological adjustment. Now that we have brought ourselves, through this illusion, to the verge of ruin, the social planner takes over these broken, segmental tools, assuring us that with them he can rebuild a structure of lasting security and peace.

### III

The social experts, of course, will reply that it is just such disastrous consequences as these that they are planning to forestall. They will deny the charge of using capitalistic tools without modifying them. The process of adapting to social change, they affirm, does not need to be chaotic; it can be ordered with a view to human welfare. And they intend to leave these techno-

logical advances no longer to blind chance, but to exercise scientific control over their consequences.

But will this be so easy as they imagine? There are two alternatives which have been suggested for the correction of technological maladjustment. The first is *regulation*. It is proposed to *direct* technological changes in accordance with a broad developmental program, in which changes in production due to new inventions can be harmonized with an existing demand, and workers can be moved about, retrained, and reassigned without lost motion. The second alternative is *anticipation*. The plan here is to allow technological development to go on freely as it has in the past, but to study its trends in order to predict the future, and then readjust our economic and labor program accordingly. There are relatively few social students, I believe, who contend that the first method, that of *regulating* technological change, is practicable. In a static order, in which only the basic, life sustaining commodities are produced, and in which future technological changes are to affect only these few commodities, the harnessing of technology to social control might be a possibility. But this is not the kind of an order which the planners want. Their vision is dynamic rather than static; it calls for advancement into unknown realms of man's conquest over nature. When once we admit this kind of an urge, who can set any limit or direction to the development which will follow? Once stimulated, who can force inventive or commercial geniuses to conform to a particular set of market calculations, to make this discovery, but not that? If we are going in for technology in a large way we must expect the future, like the past, to open up mechanical possibilities so alluring as to stampede men's imaginations and sweep our best laid plans of regulation aside.

But instead of trying to steer, by direct control, the vast sweep of technological progress, most of the planners, it seems, have bent their efforts upon trying to predict its course and getting ready to meet it. By such foresight they hope to make in advance those readjustments of capital, machinery, organization, labor, and training which will save us from disaster in the social changes before us. However reasonable this aim may at

first appear, it is just here, in its most basic assumptions, that some of our strongest doubts of the planning program arise. In their realization that, in order to plan, we must be able to predict, the planners are unquestionably right. But the vexing issue arises, can technological and social changes be predicted?

In order to design a bridge an engineer must have the assurance that, if he follows certain formulas dealing with gravitational stresses and the strength of materials, his bridge will hold. He must be able to predict physical events. That he has such an assurance and ability the entire science of building engineering will attest. Now one circumstance alone has made this prediction possible,—the fact that natural events, in the realm of bridge-construction, operate in a fairly orderly and predictable manner. We have laws of physics. Similarly, an industrial chemist works out formulas upon the basis of which managers plan large scale operations and investments. Such planning depends upon the possibility of reliable prediction; and this prediction, in turn, rests upon the fact that there are such things as laws of chemistry. A medical director lays plans for public sanitation which are of the greatest social value. This, again, is possible only because he can predict, according to certain laws, the course of the propagation of micro-organisms. In every field of natural science we find that the ability to plan depends upon our ability to predict, and prediction, in turn, is possible only because events happen, in that field, according to fairly definite and universal laws. But how about the field of social science? What broad and precise societal laws have been discovered upon which intelligent social prediction and planning can be based? To this question the labors of social scientists have, in general, returned a baffling answer: There are none. Events in society, depending as they do on so many, continually shifting circumstances, simply do not fit themselves into any orderly and predictable array. A few rough generalizations there are, to be sure; but most of these are either too vague to apply, or they foretell only what will happen under conditions of a highly specific sort, so that, in our ignorance of when or where these conditions will obtain, our attempt at prediction is practically worthless. Such social



or economic 'laws' as we possess will never enable us to plan a structure which, like the bridge of the engineer, will do its work unaltered through change and storm.

Clear as this limitation must be, it is surprising how lightly it is passed over by the planners. It is the duty of industrial leaders, says a certain authority on personnel, to plan the adjustment of labor supply to labor need not merely in their own particular business, but in their entire industry. In order to do this they must watch new international complications in the world supply and prices of raw commodities; they must observe modifications of tariff regulations, coming changes in the machinery of production and transportation, and impending discoveries of substitutes for raw materials; they must foresee the effects of competition between different types of industries designed to meet the same needs, and of competition between old industries and new ones; and finally, they must look to the future of the "sick" industries, such as cotton, bituminous coal, and electric street railways, in whose declining fortunes the livelihood of thousands of workers are at stake.

Now in the light of our drastic limitations in social prediction, just what could be done by the members of a board of economic forecasting, if we had one? Could any one have forecasted (with accuracy sufficient for planning) the invention of the printing press, the cotton gin, the steam engine, or the internal combustion motor? Was any prophet able to warn us that iceless refrigerators were going to drive out ice-men until this change was practically upon us? Could anyone have predicted the rise of wheat-raising on a large scale in the Argentine, or its world effect? Did any planner foresee what the influence of the exploitation of rubber in the British Empire, and the development of oil lands in the United States, combined with the invention of the automobile, was going to be? Who knew that 'silk' fabrics were going to be made out of wood, or that packages would come almost universally to be wrapped in cellophane? Or again, what prophet could have predicted that the coal and street car industries would become 'sick' in time to do anything about it? With all our hunches in regard to television, what planner is now ready to retrain our telephone operators for jobs in this coming in-

dust? How can we train workers for new machinery when inventors themselves do not yet know what the new machinery will be? In the realm of political change, no one could have foretold just what would be done at the Ottawa Conference, nor could any seer have unravelled in advance its intricate effects, still scarcely understood, upon production and employment in the countries affected. No one knows at this writing the ultimate fate of the question of the inter-allied debts. Will disarmament conferences cause us to begin to scrap our martial industries and find some other use for the plants and workers? If so, when will this occur, and into what fields ought these resources to be directed? Who knows? And if we don't know, how can we plan? We cannot even predict when, or in just what way, our prohibition laws will eventually be modified, nor plan how far we had better go in preparation for the coming régime. Can anyone who frankly faces this failure of social prediction, believe that an economic plan which rests for its validity upon the prevision of social changes is a solution in which we have any serious reason for hope?

And yet, in spite of all this, there remains one sense in which the prediction of human events is in some measure possible, a possibility upon which, if the planners would but accept it, rests our one chance of struggling through. To this possibility we shall presently return.

#### IV

Meanwhile, our doubts that social planners, by any simple regulation or forecasting of events, can turn the tools of our business adventuring into an economics of biological adjustment, remain well fortified. An analogy will help to make this difficulty clearer. A dog chasing his own tail is, for the moment, so engrossed in this one pursuit that nothing can enter to break the circle. Not only does he miss many other interesting experiences, but his very eagerness of concentration on this one objective makes it increasingly difficult to accomplish. Every jump toward his tail with the forepart of his body only causes the appendage to be jerked further away from his mouth, an effect which acts as an added stimulus to pursuit. The only way for the dog to

succeed is to slacken his speed, turn his attention for a while to something else, and let his tail take its own course. Now business as adventure, except for the promoter who is doing the adventuring, is really a circular process, operated not through whole individuals, but through segments of their behavior. It involves the routine habits of thousands of workers and executives running machines or performing stereotyped rôles in shops, stores, and offices, together with the segmentalized purchasing acts of consumers who shift to this new fashion or that at the dictates of manufacturers, advertisers, or other media of mass suggestion. So far as the social matrix of this segmentalized system is concerned there is practically no opportunity for intelligence or the choices of whole human personalities to enter. The system is incapable of steering its own course. It can only follow the circular, single track of production and consumption and the round of related economic circles. And like all single-track activities into which no balanced control from the outside can enter, business activities are subject to insensate spurts and retardations of the vicious circle in which they travel. We are in the same dilemma as the dog who is chasing his tail; except for the fact that what is only a moment's idle pastime for the dog is for us a matter of life and death. In normal times when business, as far as biological adjustment is concerned, is satisfactory, business men feel that they must produce still more. They spur on the invention of labor-saving machinery, reduce manufacturing costs, and sell more goods. They cannot simply reach for what they are after; they must spring. And the result—overproduction, unemployment, slowing up of business. Their tail gets away from them. Thereupon they feel that they must run still faster, produce goods to sell at a cheaper price, and by pushing their sales harder get people to buying again. When this happens, and they have 'caught up,' they say, "Thank goodness the slump is over", and they give their economic segments another spurt which sends them into the throes of a worse depression. The way out of the difficulty is the same for human beings as for the dog; namely, to give to business only the attention it is worth, to allow other interests of which we are capable to

filter into the circular process from the outside and to restore to the behavior of individuals the balance it so sorely needs. When we do this we shall find that we have not only enriched our experience and made life more worth living, but that we have progressed toward a solution of the economic problem as well.

The truth begins to dawn that business is a kind of abstraction, perhaps a delusion, when taken out of the matrix of individuals' lives. The planner who works only within the economic circle itself can never bring the circle under the control of those through whose habits it operates. He must bring into relation to the process not merely the economic segments of individuals, but individuals themselves. Just as a febrile disease must be treated by other methods besides lowering the temperature of the patient's blood, so the solution of economic difficulties must lie, in part, outside the sphere of economics itself.

Heretofore the experts have regarded the eclipse of the individual as a necessary incident of progress. In any system by which our complex society can be run the average man, in their view, must expect to lose his freedom of choice. Our task, they say, is to find the kind of system which will guarantee his welfare. When we shall have devised such a scheme the individual will not be restored to a control of the economic bases of his life; but he will be compensated by living in a perfected society where such individual control is unnecessary. Now if our preceding arguments are sound, this justification of lost individualism is a complete fallacy; and the problem of the individual and society must be stated in an altogether new and different light. For the present loss of individual autonomy, and the accompanying deplorable plight of men and women, is no mere by-product of the temporary breakdown of our business system. It is the essence of that system itself. It is not merely the effect of our disastrous crisis, but also, in large measure, its cause. Individuals, fundamentally speaking, are not lost because there is a depression; there is a depression because individuals are lost. And no new program can serve our need, no matter how well it helps us to gauge production or harness machinery to a higher living

standard, until these human resources can be restored. No plan for society will succeed which does not make it possible ultimately for individuals to plan for themselves.

## V

If this be true, the most auspicious course for planners would be to stop tinkering with economic institutions, and turn their attention to individuals. Their hope lies not in whipping up the jaded segments of business enterprise, but in observing what human personalities are now doing to break through the circle and regain control of their lost destiny. The expedients which individuals have so far devised in this direction have, it seems to me, been misjudged by social planners, who see in them only a sign of retrogression to a lower social level. Mr. George Soule, in an able article<sup>1</sup> discusses four such types of 'reactionary adjustment' which portend to him "an industrial revolution turned backwards." The first is the restriction of the output of mechanical industry. "Factories and mills," he says, "will play a smaller part in satisfying people's wants and employ a smaller proportion of the population." The other deplored readjustments are the tendency of farmers to go out of the market for industry's products; the increase, among the unemployed, of such institutions as handicraft, barter, dependence, and delinquency; and finally the rise of a class of 'personal service' dependents of the rich.

Let us cease, for the moment, to mourn about the collapsing economic structure and turn our gaze squarely toward these 'lower level' adjustments of individuals. Are the planners' suspicions about them justified? As for the deplored decrease of factory output, if such a trend could come without too great suffering, would it not be the very readjustment which is, at present, biologically needed? Have we any assurance that, with the present rapid increase of mechanization, a greater output from factories will mean more employment for men and women? Do not recent calculations tend to show that it would mean actually less? If we had back the full prosperity of the days before the

<sup>1</sup> *Harper's*, December, 1932.

depression, statisticians tell us that we could not now absorb the output which our plants are equipped to provide. Is it not absurd, under such conditions, to argue for emphasis upon factory production? And what of the farmers whose return to simpler tools and methods is helping them to tide over the depression in independence of the industrial machinery they cannot buy? If a decent living can still be gained in this fashion, is the method bad? Can any one who has seen the life of the farmers in southern Germany, France, or Jugo Slavia, where the machine age has not yet penetrated, maintain that theirs is an existence to be despised? It is not the return of American farmers to the horse and buggy which is producing the tragic scenes on our farms today, but the nightmare of taxes and debts which has followed in the wake of the shipwreck of our business adventuring. Let us also look dispassionately at bartering and handicraft, readjustments which the planners anathematize as stabilization at a lower level. Upsetting as these processes may be to the planners' notion of business recovery, they have advantages which cannot be gainsaid. Barter and handicraft raise no possibility of overproduction or disastrous loss of employment. For every seller there is a buyer in immediate prospect, otherwise no production is undertaken. There can occur through barter no inflation or deflation of credit and capital, no wage slavery, no hazardous speculation. Furthermore, the individuals engaged in this mode of life have an occupation in which their personal talents and interests can be expressed, and an opportunity for face to face contact with their fellows. The artist of my acquaintance who exchanges a painting with a Swiss inn keeper for a two weeks' sojourn in the Alps, though he may be slowing up machine industry, is making life richer for every one concerned. The act of a dentist who, finding that his patients had no money, let the contracts for building and decorating his house in exchange for his professional services, may be classed by Mr. Soule with mediaeval dependency. In my opinion, however, it reveals an individual resourcefulness, a humanity, and a social insight which may in the end go further than the planning of the shrewdest expert.

And what shall be said of the re-emergence, under the depression, of an era of personal service? In addition to the beauty specialists and 'professionals' whom Mr. Soule describes as dependents of the rich, this category should also take in the man-a-block who shovels my snow, the woman who comes to my house with her baked goods, the man laden with honey or hand-prepared sausage, and the seamstress whose daughter brings needle work to my door. Should it not also include those ladies who have turned their bridge club afternoon over to sewing garments for the poor of their communities, and the unemployed fathers who preserve Christmas for their children by making their Christmas toys by hand? My furniture was recently upholstered by the 'personal service' of an itinerant workman whose handicraft my children and I watched with admiration not unmixed with envy. Many skilled craftsmen, previously employed by large concerns, have set up little shops of their own, and are establishing personal contacts with patrons whom, in the old régime, they would have met only in the capacity of an 'institution.' All this of course checks the reinstatement of big business and the aspirations of the super-planners. But it means the continuation of life for individuals by the work of their own hands. It eliminates over-production, restores employment, and renews the confidence of men and women in one another and in their economic future.

One of the inklings that individual personalities are beginning to break through the economic circle is seen in the foreshadowing of a new community life. Not only are there leanings in this direction within the shell of the older manufacturing, educational, and religious institutions, but movements are in progress toward the deliberate formation of new self-sustaining communities. Some of these have been recruited from the various crafts and professions in such a way that each member, by pursuing the vocation in which he can find the maximum self-expression, contributes to the common life of all. That such groups need not represent a complete reversion to the handicraft stage is shown by the fact that the members of some of them are developing, or preparing to develop, their own modest shops and electric power plants. These are the modern pioneers, seeking, not in a primitive wilderness, but amid the wreckage of a collapsing civil-

ization, for a greater security and freedom of life. For granting that we cannot subdue nature in this manner upon a vast scale, we can, in little, self-sustaining communities, be more fully ourselves. We can meet one another as individuals and not as national personnel. Family living can return. Our lives can be made secure not through charity campaigning, but by the fact that we shall have become truly necessary to one another. We can become in fact that which we are now only in theory, our neighbor's helper, companion, and friend. Is this reawakened sense of community a sign of readjustment upon an inferior level? Are the traits which draw men and women toward one another for mutual aid and companionship merely temporary makeshifts,—the debris and flotsam of a wave of business recession? Are they creaks of gears out of adjustment which will be silenced forever when the planners' machinery is oiled and running again? If so, it will be a sorry day for us when those plans begin to operate. For we shall have sacrificed to technological and business adventure not only human handiwork but human character as well. We shall have cast out those very qualities which might still make life upon this planet the thing we truly desire.

Despairing of any early possibility of getting a regular job, many of the lost individuals are adjusting themselves to their cramped resources, turning their backs on business, and giving their attention to things which pay in terms other than money. Released from the urge of higher wages and profits, large numbers are turning to the schools, the colleges, the public reading rooms, and the libraries. The enrollment in colleges and universities has held up in an amazing way considering the inroads of the depression among the families from which the students come. Many students who had previously dropped their college work for lucrative business opportunities have now returned for study. In addition to the regular academic enrollment there has been a remarkable recent development of university extension courses, forums, lectures, discussion clubs and other agencies of adult education. Individuals, in these days of 'self improvement for want of something better to do,' are also turning to outdoor recreations, to hiking, to gardening, and to the arts of music, painting, drama, history, biography, philosophy, social service,



and a revaluation of religion. While it is impossible to estimate the exact degree in which the cultivation of these interests has been due to the depression, the fact nevertheless remains that their cultivation has continued, and has in some respects increased, in a period when the bare physical necessities of life are increasingly difficult to obtain.

Let the planners of a utopia of technological leisure give heed to this. It is granted, of course, that a minimum basis of physical support is a necessity for the rise of human culture. There must also be a certain amount of leisure time. But this is all. Technological invention, labor-saving machinery, and business acceleration have never been required for cultural development in the history of the world; nor are they required today. The belief that a multiplicity of inventions and an increased material consumption are the only true avenues to an era of cultivated leisure is without foundation. The present facts, indeed, suggest the exact contrary. In the days when we were headed most swiftly toward the technological millennium, there appeared the least evidence that we were going to know how to use it. We were so excited about new inventions that we found neither the time nor the mood for this more basic problem. We were struggling to create a time-gap in life into which we imagined that culture could be poured as molten steel is poured into the moulds of our foundries. This was when we were busy and prosperous, and leisure endowed with riches was just around the corner. But now that the wheels have slowed almost to stopping, we have a new leisure and a very different one from that which we had planned. It is crude, impoverished, worried, and by all counts greatly inferior to the planners' utopia. But in spite of the pinch of circumstance, we have now not only the time but also the mood and inclination to think. And we have plenty of occupations to be leisurely about so long as we do not seek them in factories and offices. The very breakdown of the system by which our leisure was to have been won has probably done more toward enabling us to profit by leisure than any other single influence to which we can point.

## VI

Let it not be supposed that I regard everything which has happened in this tragic depression as good. Its miseries are too shockingly apparent to be turned aside by calloused optimism. I mean only that this crisis, like every other, has its lessons if we will but heed them. It has brought us a profound disillusionment regarding the way we were going and has shown us glimpses of a different pathway. From out of the failure of our institutions there have re-emerged true qualities of character. All that is needed are planners whose spirit is great enough to see them. Intimate contact with nature, the skill of handiwork, a renewed community spirit, personal service, independence, courage, neighborliness, and the desire for quiet self-cultivation,—these are not lower level makeshifts. They are not dross, but rediscovered assets, our long tarnished gold which privation has again rubbed bright. They are not mere by-products of our disease, but guides and symptoms of our returning health. However crude and strange they may appear in the shell of our old system, we may find in them, if we have wit enough, a clue to the direction which our recovery must ultimately take. For they are the influences through which the circle can be broken, through which men and women can enter to guide their derelict economy once more upon its course.

Nor do I mean that the road to recovery leads backward to any golden past. No era of recorded history has ever held the full secret of a perfect human adjustment. I should be one of the last to wish to return to all that the handicraft age implied, to the bitter toil, the hardships, and the dangers which our ancestors faced. It is not the guiding star of our past industry to which I am objecting, but only our haste to tie our wagon fast to technology's future comet, our blind obsession to destroy the control of individuals over the vital circumstances of their own lives. Whatever may have been the condition of those earlier pioneers, they were still able to make their industry, their thrift, and their other virtues count. Though lost in the wilderness they

kept their contact with their natural world. And in that respect have we not lost something that was vital and precious to our race? I am not suggesting that we stop human progress, but only that we pause and re-define it. I am seeking not to turn the industrial revolution backward, but to find a new road out from it to what lies beyond. Is it not stupid to reason that because a certain process has in the past been good for men, an unending increase in that process will be always better? Over and above the machines stand human beings; and what we are needing now is not a plan for building and running a mechanized society, but a fuller, securer, and more satisfying method of individual life. For this we shall need new tools. The 'society of the future' must be built not by economic segments, but by men and women.

## VII

To return now to the problem of prediction. In the physical sciences we deal with occurrences which, being in conformity with natural laws, are independent of the will of man. If a bridge is to be built, its construction must be based upon laws of engineering which are beyond the power of the builder to alter. In social changes, on the other hand, we are concerned with events into which human volition and desire are made the basis of interpretation. Although we cannot predict social occurrences on the basis of laws operating independently of ourselves, we *can* foresee what is about to happen when we ourselves have effectively willed to bring it to pass. It is possible, within limits, for us to forecast the events of which we, by our voluntary action, form a part. The physical engineer, for example, can predict *how* the bridge must be built; but the 'social' engineer, if he has sufficient power, can predict whether it is to be built at all. Though exact scientific prediction in the social field is impossible, 'voluntaristic' predictions can often be readily made.

Clearly, then, there *is* a way to foresee and plan for social changes if we are willing to take it. That way is to decide for ourselves whether or not such changes shall occur. This consideration places the rôle of a social planner in a new light. His duty, rightly seen, lies not in an attempt to predict an unpre-

dictable social trend, not in conjuring with societal laws where there are no laws, but in helping men and women to realize that they themselves, not nature, are responsible for these trends. Instead of prattling about the sweep of cultural progress and the gaps which must occur because such progress is not uniform, instead of tinkering with personnel bureaus to adapt us to this 'inevitable' cultural lag, our planner must boldly raise the question whether men and women consider such 'progress' to be worth its cost, whether they want the commercialization of new inventions to continue to gain so complete an ascendancy over life.

I am, of course, aware of the common belief that technological changes are inevitable. "You cannot stop invention," is one of the most frequent observations one hears upon this subject. Yet it is an amazingly shallow observation. One solitary individual, looking out on the vast field of business enterprise playing upon the uncritical susceptibility of the masses, naturally feels that he is powerless to alter the process. Nor do I hold any brief for an attempted regulation of technology by a few experts. But if the agents in the process are to be the great majority of the individuals in civilization, the statement that it is impossible to check commercialized invention, is the sheerest nonsense. That which men have the power to do, they also have the power to stop doing. Because one individual cannot retard technology, it is absurd to argue that it is beyond the power of human control, and goes on by some momentum of its own. Machines do not fall from heaven; nor is there any law which determines that their exploitation must go on increasingly forever. While it is impossible, of course, for a single individual, in seeking to change his habits, to change the settled habits of all the rest, it is quite possible for the rest to change their own habits. One man cannot prevent the psychological machinery of business adventuring from being used so long as that machinery is in existence; but the men and women of whose economic behavior that machinery is composed have the power, by altering their behavior, to abolish the machinery at any time they choose. We cannot stop inventions? We are stopping them now. And if the members of a certain employee-owned canning factory in Indiana, who are now

becoming a self-sustaining community, decide (as perhaps they may) that such an existence is better than a return to the profits of the machine, the development of inventions in that particular locality will receive a permanent check. Social change is not impersonal, cosmic, necessitous, and absolute; it is human, willed, and capable of acceleration or abandonment at any time its authors choose. When we are ready for socialized acting the problem of social planning will therefore take care of itself.

Are the planners ready to accept this challenge? Are they single-minded in their purpose; or are they seeking with one hand to beckon individuals into the harbor of self-determination, while with the other they are steering along the old, ramshackled bark of business enterprise? Are they trying to save organizations or men? When our jargon of progress is making dump heaps of our plants and vagabonds of our people, when the promise of a millennium of leisure is leading us ever further from a leisurely purpose, when the program of controlling nature has precluded men from helping themselves, when thrift produces further privation and effort the mockery of a deeper hopelessness, when the operations of bureaucratic governments, as planning institutions, are impoverishing the men and women for whom they are supposed to provide, when programs of national development have made armaments as great as ever and national hatreds greater, it is time for the social planners to face about and submit not only their plans, but their underlying axioms, their 'laws' and even their private motives to the light of a searching and fearless scrutiny.

When the prodigal son said, "I will arise and go to my father," he was making a voluntaristic prediction. He knew what was going to happen because he had made up his mind to return to a forgiving and generous parent. No social expert could have made the slightest prediction, from any physical or social law, of the occurrence of this event or of the manner in which it would turn out. It was an act *sui generis*, a free choice which was at once its prediction and its own fulfillment. This decision, moreover, was no mere plan for readjusting the prodigal's capital or energy to the riotous career upon which he had launched; it

---

was a complete reversal, a reëxamination of the very philosophy upon which that career was based. By acting upon it the course of a life was changed; abandoned living was turned into steadfast and fruitful relationships. The prediction was verified. This was so not because its author had foreseen the operation of social laws and had planned his worldly affairs accordingly, but because he had settled within himself a fundamental question as to the meaning of life. Without such a confronting of realities, any plan which he might have made would have been only a makeshift; it would have brought him around, sooner or later, to the circle of his own futility. Like prodigal sons, we, too, must come to ourselves. We must turn back and test the values upon which our civilization is based. We must search the motives behind our planning of the past, turning our gaze inward to those sacrifices, those changes of heart, which we must achieve before a better order can be ours. Having done this, we shall be ready to plan.



**FAMILIAL**





---

---

## XV

### SUBSTITUTES FOR HOMES

---

---

WHEN MR. HERBERT HOOVER 'looks at the nation' he sees not one hundred million individuals, but twenty-three million families.

The unit of American life is the family and the home. It is the economic unit as well as the moral and spiritual unit. But it is more than this. It is the beginning of self-government. It is the throne of our highest ideals. It is the source of the spiritual energy of our people. For the perfecting of this unit . . . we must lend every energy of the Government.

In justice to the man who has been our President, it should be mentioned that this economium was uttered in one of the speeches of his presidential campaign<sup>1</sup> and, as such, may be taken as an expression of American idealism rather than as a statement of sober, present facts. Like most current pronouncements upon home life, it seems to embody a confusion of two different ideas.

There is, on the one hand, the family as a group of individual human beings who respond to one another in a face to face manner and who are held together by no ties other than those of mutual affection. The acts of each member are determined not by any considerations of custom or propriety, but by his personal feeling toward the other members and by their specific behavior toward him. This may be called the primitive, or *biological* family. Under this conception each familial group is different in character from every other. Upon the other hand, the family may be thought of as a unit of social organization, stable and uniform throughout society, and consisting of a set of relationships among husbands and wives, and parents and children. The behavior of the members toward one another, in this view, is governed not by the give and take of personalities, but by what is conventionally expected of individuals in their domestic rôles.

---

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered at Elizabethton, Tennessee, October 7, 1928.

This is what we may call the *institutional* conception. Mr. Hoover was probably thinking of a family in the biological sense, as a natural group of personalities under the leadership of intelligent and kindly parents; but his manner of speaking confused these two notions, assuming that the fruits of the one would be the fruits also of the other.

While the formal or institutional aspect of family life has remained unaltered for many generations, its biological character or content has, in recent decades, changed almost beyond recognition. In the old days life was centered in and about the home; today it has moved to the factory, the store, and the office. We have come to think not in terms of families but of organized masses of people who sustain the life of the "great society" in which their individualities are submerged. In the days when an individual lived mainly in the family and local community his life came into contact at every point with the same group of personalities. Now he spends his time in many places and among a bewildering variety of groups. As a friend of mine who resides in New York City once put it, life is fatiguing because "one is torn between too many different patterns."

Formerly husbands and wives were not merely sex mates, but partners in many other interests as well. The manifold task of caring for the children required the study and discussion between them of many topics. Today the directors of social and civic agencies, in taking over most of these parental responsibilities, have deprived the parents of an important bond of mutual understanding. In the "higher life" of the family there is now little opportunity for the sharing of experience between husband and wife. Professional groupings, lecture courses, Chambers of Commerce, civic organizations, clubs, and similar agencies have absorbed their time and energies. Modern husbands have also lost the opportunity to know and value their wives as personalities in the simpler daily affairs of the household. In the field of hospitality married partners of yesterday had an additional sphere in which they could appreciate one another's true resources. But neighborly calls are today almost obsolete, while the gathering of guests within the home is being replaced by the

practice of entertaining at hotels, theaters, and other places of amusement. In every sphere of participation between husband and wife, life is becoming more intellectually and spiritually barren. Sympathies which might have been deep and fruitful are void. Almost the only personal needs which each finds satisfied through the other are those of financial income and of sex.

The influences which are estranging wives and husbands are also producing a gulf between the members of successive generations. Parents and children cannot know one another as intimately as in former days. My early memory of my father, who was a country doctor, is particularly vivid, because it was my privilege to share his companionship in so many aspects of life. I recall sitting beside him as he drove at breakneck speed to save a child who had partaken of fly-poison or of paris green. I can remember him stopping his horse to explain to friends and relatives the details of some patient's condition. Because his office formed a part of our own home, I saw many tangled human miseries; but I saw them as they were unraveled beneath his skilled and comforting touch. I still picture him standing half-dressed before the kitchen stove, preparing breakfast in order to spare my mother. And there were the numerous vagabonds to whom he gave shelter and employment about the place, helping them meanwhile to reconstruct their lives. On a Saturday he loved to put us all to work in the cellar and work with us, producing order and even beauty out of chaos. Within the quiet of the family pew I would imbibe, without the need of words, his feeling towards the unseen mysteries of life. These are but a few of the many phases of my father's character which I came to know, to admire, and perhaps to emulate. For our family was still a portion of the old community pattern; our lives were lived as the full expression of one personality toward another.

In the intellectual sphere as well as the practical, opportunities for children to become acquainted with their fathers and mothers are nowadays transitory. It is no longer incumbent upon the elders to point out the wonders of nature when this is done more effectively through scouting organizations and the child's encyclopedia. Why, we think, should a parent with only a faltering

musical education sit laboriously at the piano when a flood of the world's best music performed by artists can be obtained by turning on the player-piano, the victrola, or the radio? Art and science, like other pursuits, have become organized through distant corporations and are delivered to us through machinery. But we have sacrificed the opportunity of responding to the artist directly as a fellow-being or of knowing him as a human personality. Hence, while the child passively receives all the sensations of beauty, he must inevitably lose something of the spirit of its quest.

Many a city youth today must find life trying. Every organization with which he associates seems to have its own peculiar standards. In each situation, such as athletic and recreational activities, economic employment, school work, Sunday school, and the movies, he must make adjustments which frequently work at cross-purposes with the ideals expressed in his other groups. There is no one to help him to organize these conflicting elements into a single workable pattern for his own life. In such confusion there is little wonder that he becomes listless, that he tends to grow up with no definite point of view at all, or else breaks from all conventional moorings and drifts into some form of egoistic and precocious dissipation.

If, through our segmentalized manner of living, children are deprived of the steadying influence of their parents, it is no less certain that parents are losing their children. Should I wish really to know my boy or girl (and this will be increasingly true as they grow older), I must go out into the community to gain my knowledge. I must study my child's school record. I must learn about his physical condition from the head of the clinic. I must go to the playground supervisor or to the Y. M. C. A. in order to discover his athletic and social adjustments. His employer, should he have one, must be interviewed. And finally, I must see how he is getting on at the church school and in his art or his music class. When all these reports have been collected, granting that the information is accurate, I now have before me only the fragments of my child. What he is, in himself, as apart from all these pigeonholes and compartments, I have no

way of knowing. He has ceased to be, for me, an intimately experienced personality, but has become a case study. I am no longer a parent, but a social worker. Nor can his teachers and supervisors help me, for each of them knows the child from one particular angle only. Since I have lost that center of contact from which I myself might have influenced him, his future lies no longer in my own hands, but at the mercy of 'the great society.'

Just as the bond between husbands and wives is tending to become one merely of sex love, so the contact between parents and children is narrowing down to an intense but purely emotional affection. The break-up of home life does not, as some think, liberate the young from the tyranny and repression of an older generation. For what really enslaves the young is not the customs of the past, but too narrow a love. Such an affection demands of a child a conformity to parental feelings; and there arises a conflict between his desire for self-expression and the dread of renouncing those whom he loves. The saving grace of the situation, the safety valves afforded by a variety of shared points of view and interests, are no longer at hand. Such an attachment makes demands upon personalities without understanding them; and love without understanding does not enrich life, but stultifies it.

Young people of today are prone to rationalize the difficulty by the theory that the modern youth have suddenly climbed to greater heights and have achieved far deeper insights than the generation immediately preceding. Parents, on the other hand, are shocked and frightened by changes in the moral standards and attitudes of the young. In our present painful misunderstanding we might clear the air for a new start by realizing that these recriminations are beside the point. The root of the trouble lies, in my opinion, in our acceptance of a way of living in which individuals are chained in a common submission to machines and habits of organization. Engrossed as they are in the pursuits of vast impersonal associations and business and professional groupings, parents no longer have time or talent for family relationships. Lacking the opportunity to evolve a new and broader philosophy of living, they can only cling whimsically to the

standards of the past. Meanwhile the children, whom they love but do not comprehend, are groping blindly and unaided toward some fresh ideal of life. Can this longing be fulfilled before it is stifled? Can these young people find a new individuality and restore a meaning to family life? Upon this issue rests the hope of a sympathetic understanding between the parents and children of the future.

## II

It is a striking fact that, in spite of the decline of the old life from which our familial customs and expectations have emerged, these expectations themselves have continued. A father in the earlier period was a ruler whose word could not be challenged. We still insist that he shall be the supreme authority over the household, though there is now very little about which he can be intelligently authoritative. Although educational and moral functions have been taken largely away from home life, we persist in holding parents responsible for the rearing of children who shall be upright and useful citizens. The acceptance of the sanctity and procreative function of marriage grew up naturally, under the old conditions, as a part of the security of home relationships. Today, though home life is being threatened through causes other than moral, we cling to the old family morality as though it were still our one great hope. Oblivious to profound social changes, we are existing in the past as far as our domestic habits and attitudes are concerned.

It is at this point that certain social scientists are attacking the problem. They are proposing that we invent a new set of family customs and institutions which will be more in accord with modern needs. Society as a whole, they say, is right; at least its trend and direction are beyond human control. It is superior to individuals, though like the latter it is perpetually evolving to a new and higher type. Our only problem, therefore, is that of adjusting its different phases so that they shall progress in a uniform and harmonious manner. Since all the other institutions are changing, we must evolve a new type of domestic institution.

Although this solution sounds plausible, I am convinced that

it is both gratuitous in its logic and futile in its application. It assumes that there are super-organic laws which control human affairs, and that whatever course we take in society is inevitable and, therefore, right. It is also the creed of those who find our present civilization so pleasant or so profitable that they must close their eyes to its defects. The belief that the biological theory of evolution can be applied to society has been discredited in recent years. It was founded upon dubious organic analogies, *a priori* definitions of perfection, and a philosophical misunderstanding of the nature of laws. And after all, what makes the present state of family living deplorable is not the fact that the parts of society are failing to work harmoniously together, but the fact that such a situation represents the thwarting and unhappiness of individuals. Human beings, then, rather than impersonal institutions, should be our starting point.

But the best way to convince ourselves upon this issue is to examine the various substitutes for the traditional family relationship which the 'architects of our social structure' are proposing. Let us begin with the marriage relation. The marriage of young people—as a procreative, household enterprise—is being delayed by the increasing specialization of work, the prolongation of vocational training, the competitive and rising standards of living, and the desire of women for business or professional careers. It is now delayed far beyond the arrival of physiological maturity. It, therefore, becomes necessary to forego parenthood, at least for a considerable time, and to conceive of marriage purely as a relation for comradeship and sexual satisfaction. Hence, there are arising more liberal views of sexual morality. The institutions of trial marriage and the companionate (the "marriage for two") are being welcomed both in theory and practice.

Strangely enough this new conception of marriage, which has arisen as a necessity, has come to be acclaimed as a virtue. Its advocates have represented it as a revolt against the narrow morality of the past and against a society which demanded continuous propagation at the expense of individual happiness. So far, the justification is sound; but is this the entire story? I



am inclined to think that the renunciation of parenthood has, for the most part, been forced upon us by the conditions under which we live rather than selected by freedom of choice. When we remove from our homes nearly all the activities in which husbands and wives can participate on behalf of their children, the rearing of offspring, even when it is not financially precluded, becomes a tiresome and irrelevant process. Having rendered parenthood difficult and meaningless, our next logical step is to abolish it. A man and woman who have been thus divested of the prospects of household and children are spoken of euphemistically as "the new family."

But waiving the desirability of having children, will the proposed changes prove an effective basis for marriages of the future? This is doubtful. The reason is not that the customs of the past were any more wise or moral than our present experiments, but that the newer methods fail to reach the heart of the problem. The restlessness felt by so many married couples is due not so much to the choice of the wrong partner or to the disturbing presence of children as to the break-up and dissemination of their interests throughout the greater community. Under the proposed forms of wedlock there will be no more opportunity than previously for husbands and wives to know and appreciate one another; hence, the trial marriage can in the end prove nothing. As for the companionate idea, while it may succeed among a few intellectuals who have some major interest independent of the rest of the world, it can in general accomplish little more than the traditional marriage relation. Now that husbands and wives are seeking careers away from each other and their home, now that they have stripped off the burdens of children and household encumbrances, what is left for them to be companionable about? Some social genius of the future may work out a scheme for true self-realization in wedlock. But surely the current proposals for the revamping of family institutions are fraught with no large promise of success.

The architects of these proposed social changes are of course advocating the childless marriage only for persons whose economic and vocational circumstances render such a course the

happiest solution. There remains for the mass of people the problem of the new relationship between parents and children. And here the suggestion is offered that extra-familial institutions should be still further developed to take over the old functions of the home, while the parent of the future should play the rôle of a liaison officer between the home and the community. I will quote from a recent book written by a well-known scholar in this general field:

We must frankly face the fact that recreation outside the home has come to stay. This suggests that parents learn to participate in community affairs in order to select wholesome leisure-time activities for their children. If they are actively interested in the establishment, supervision, and maintenance of public playgrounds, censorship of movies, inspection and regulation of dance halls, and in supporting child protective legislation, then new attitudes and mores of civic participation will have a chance to develop. When parents know and understand with reference to family needs such movements as Boy and Girl Scouts, Camp-fire Groups, wider use of school equipment, and school self-government, as well as the enforcement of compulsory attendance and health laws, other new attitudes will be developed.<sup>2</sup>

But how, we ask, are all these agencies to be related to the need of children for a fundamentally integrated life? To what new set of wholesome personal relationships between parents and children will they lead? The writer has assured us that other new attitudes will develop. But what attitudes? Will there arise a broad and guiding philosophy of child training, or merely further stereotypes for breaking up the life of the child into segments? Under this program, parents, far from being restored to a genuine usefulness in family living, are, it seems to me, rendered still more ineffectual. They cannot associate with their families directly; they can reach them only vicariously through organizations. They may select and equip the playground; but they have no contact with their children during play. They may choose a scouting or campfire group; but they are likely to learn little

---

<sup>2</sup> Chapin, F. S., *Cultural Change*, Century Co. (1928), pp. 328-29.

concerning what such associations mean to their boys and girls or what bearing, if any, they have upon home life. Parents may protect the young by censorship of movies, inspection of amusements, and child welfare legislation; but the effect of this regulation, or the kind of life for which the children are being protected, lies beyond their knowledge or control.

There are phases of education which cannot be delegated successfully to school activities, or even to the coöperation of parents and teachers. The knowledge taught in the classroom is, of course, useful; but does a child not need the wisdom and background also of his parents? And who, if not parents, can help him to reflect upon the knowledge he receives in school and relate it organically to his own life? Surely not coöperative organizations. The Parent-Teachers Association has become, in some localities, another sociability group for drawing parents away from their homes, the child remaining a neglected appendage. The same considerations apply to moral and religious training. Character is acquired not merely by sitting on a bench and listening to ethical precepts, but through the actual frictions arising in face to face situations, as in family life, in which children learn to work out their difficulties through a developing sense of justice tinged with affection and loyalty.

Even in the field of health there is a need which only the members of the biological family can supply. Modern public-health laws and clinics are effective, and we have at hand skilled specialists for the treatment of almost every organ of the child's body. But what of mental health? We must consider that subtle tension which shows itself not in any particular organ but in the delicate emotional balance and adjustment of the entire personality. Much of our present toll of nervous and mental disease can probably be laid to the fact that a child, like an adult, is nowadays "torn between too many patterns," and that so few opportunities for quiet and stabilizing contacts between personalities have survived in the modern era. A theory has lately arisen, through a mistaken impression of psychoanalysis, that most, if not all, parents are vicious, that scarcely any are fit to raise children, and that parental love is likely to lead to

psychoneurotic conflicts. Even granting (which I do not) that there could be found a body of better informed and more self-controlled guardians to whom the children could be entrusted, this theory is hopelessly one-sided. Defective mental hygiene arises not from parental love and attention—for psychiatrists and social workers agree that these are needed—but from the unstable and exacting character of that affection when it is entirely divorced from other interests. There must be a give and take between child and parent, which though based securely upon the love of the one for the other, is enriched by a variety of mutual experiences, interests, and points of view. For this foundation of health there is no substitute, though our clinics and our specialists be multiplied a hundredfold.

### III

Community substitutes for family life, though invested with true modern efficiency, must, therefore, be regarded as failing in their ultimate purpose. But more than this, they bring into the picture new and hazardous consequences of their own. I received the other day a circular letter, endorsed with the facsimilie signature of an eminent Amercian scholar, which opens by quoting the following plaint from a working-class mother:

I would like to play with the children more than I do but I'm too tired even when I have the time. . . . And my man is so tired when he comes home from work that he just lies down and rests and never plays with the children.

Following this comes an appeal for aid for an organization which aims to correct this condition. The descriptive folder begins with these words:

In Pioneer Youth clubs, one interest calls up another. Making airplanes and ships took two clubs on industrial trips. Questions on a hike led a group to the museum. A fire in the neighborhood resulted in an investigation of tenements and fire laws. Wanted—a club library, and soon the boys were designing book-plates and cards and selecting books. . . . Three members of a

young people's group . . . conducted a forum on The Unorganized Worker.

Such activities under wise leaders absorb the interests of Pioneer Youth boys and girls in a score of neighborhood clubs.

*New clubs could be formed at once if money were available.*

Such is the remedy offered for an industrial situation which separates the lives of parents from those of their children. The leaders of the Pioneer Youth of America are serving no doubt a useful purpose. Given adequate funds, they may provide opportunities for many children who otherwise would grow up in boredom and neglect. But after all, does their solution follow logically from the nature of the evil it seeks to cure? If parents are too tired to pay any attention to their children, would it not be better to correct this condition first, rather than to condone it by substituting for the parent a playmate hired, as it were, by the community? If fathers and mothers are too preoccupied with other things to be interested in their children, would it not be wise to inquire whether those other things are worthy of the sacrifice?

And what is to become of these children of the Pioneer Youth Movement when their hours of play are over? In the absence of any other class who will keep the machines of industry running, they must some day step down from their high adventures into the spiritless drudgery which has engulfed their parents. The children of these children will then be taken. They, in turn, will be rescued from the homes which are still empty, entertained for a short time, and then abandoned to the same doom which awaits their maturer years. The youth is always the pioneer, but his excursions never gain for him and his race the possession of promised lands, but only glimpses from which he must return forever to the same painful road whence he departed. Through community recreations we have indeed created a new world, but we have left the old world standing. We find joyous dreams in youth, but in maturity the dull and bitter reality.

If the reader will turn to a copy of the *Boy Scouts' Manual* he will find there some six hundred pages describing a realm into

which over half a million American boys have entered. Here is a remarkable composite of all that youths hold dear: honors, knightly exploits, chivalry, passwords, subtle woodcraft, and an intimacy with plants, birds, and animals of every description. I, for one, would rather live my life in such a world than in our present scheme. But I cannot. And every boy, alas, must some day leave it. And when that time comes he will find that it has all too little to do with the issues with which he must cope in a twentieth century America. The leaders of such movements will say that, while the interests of youth are naturally different from those of maturity, the ideals and philosophy embodied in those pursuits will be carried over and will work toward the improvement of society. This outcome is possible in certain cases, but it seems to me, on the whole, doubtful. We cannot prepare ourselves to 'redeem society' by spending our youth outside it, particularly when the juvenile world is, by implication, an indictment of the entire adult order and a refuge from its imperfections. The powerful drives of maturity, the urge for sex life, for social status, and for economic security must be realized through the civilization in which we are to live as adults. As they grow older, therefore, our children must exchange their earlier ideals for the code of modern men and women.

The tragic gap between youth and adulthood is seen also on a wide scale in European countries. Particularly in Germany, throngs of adolescents are renouncing their bondage to a materialistic way of living and are withdrawing from the world to live their youthful dream of beauty, natural simplicity, and brotherhood. This amazing rift which cuts across the stream of life is deeply significant; for it points to the repudiation of a world order by those whose eyes are not yet too dull to see its implications. But what will happen as these youths grow older? Unless prepared by intelligent and sympathetic family contacts to bridge the gap between the generations, the cohorts of the Youth Movement can never make their contribution to the denizens of a maturer world. Their radiant enthusiasm must fade beneath the civilization which they inherit.

I do not mean to disparage these attempts to supply a whole-

some content for the leisure days of childhood. The activities fostered through the Boy and Girl Scouts and the Pioneer Youth Movement are of distinct value. They replace for children much that an age of machinery and commerce have crowded out of human living. To their originators must be given credit for the vision of this need. But these leaders have failed to attack the evil at its source. Not realizing that our system of social and economic behavior is directly associated with this neglect of childhood, they have played into the hands of its advocates by offering to bolster up its weaknesses. Accepting the breakdown of family living as an unalterable fact, they have tried to invent a means of carrying on, so far as children are concerned, without disturbing our faith in our 'sacred institutions.' And in so doing they have contributed not a little to the hazards and confusion of modern living. For through their efforts, the lives of individuals are separated not only lengthwise into diverging streams of interest, but crosswise into periods which are unrelated. A child is a stranger not only to his parents, but even to himself. Under such a system there can be no continuity, no striving toward some constant goal, but only shifting interests which, as they vanish, leave doubt and lack of purpose in their place.

But the story of individual disorganization is not yet complete. Under the conditions of modern industry, old age presents another crisis; and many are advocating that the greater community shall again step in. In the old, self-contained family, men and women could pursue their employment throughout life with a speed proportioned to their strength. In their old age they had their place within the family circle. To the common life of their associates in the family they contributed their lives, and in the family they found their lasting happiness and reward. But nowadays as soon as energy begins to lag, sometimes even in middle life, a worker is likely to be cast off to make room for younger blood. Once more he must face a new and uncertain future, but this time without the means or hope of meeting it. He must drift, alone, uncertain of a livelihood, without respect, and crushed by the sense of being wholly useless to himself or to others. Overlooking fundamental causes, we leap to the breach with new institutions. We

agitate for doles for the unemployed, "homes" for the aged, mothers' allowances, and old age pensions. By such travesties upon the human spirit we fortify the system which has robbed us of our worth as individuals and broken us upon the wheel we call our civilization.

#### IV

The new patterns proposed to remedy the present inequalities of family living, far from solving our dilemma, are, therefore, involving us only the more deeply. They are showing new dimensions along which life can be broken and scattered. Such efforts must finally yield to the realization that the essence of family living lies not in its form but in its content. In youth as in age, in work as in play, in physical care as in education and morals, there remains a vital function which only such a face to face relation as the biological family association can fulfill. No artifice of social planning, no new marriage contract or community agency can replace this relationship as a medium for the development and integration of human personalities. Fresh expectancies of conduct may be defined, new organizations may spring up to take over old familial duties; but these devices only dissipate our energies the further and realign us among new factions and patterns. It is only through one another, as complete personalities, and through our common labors, sorrows, and triumphs that we can attain to genuine self-expression. Only communion with whole individuals can make an individual whole.

We are coming inescapably to realize that the family, which has been eulogized as the fountain of our spiritual energy, has from the beginning of history been none other than this natural, face to face grouping. It is not a form of marriage, nor an obligation for few children or for many. Domestic appliances and model playgrounds have nothing to do with it; nor is it a centralizing agency for community organizations. It is not a societal form nor an institution. All these notions and contrivances are without its domain. The only familial reality which, in my opinion, is ultimately worth considering is that of human beings who associate together; and the life of this family is the life which actual fathers, mothers, and children live in one another's



company. Unless there are opportunities for individuals to grow and to realize their potentialities through free contact with one another, the most highly perfected institutional pattern will be only an empty formula.

The theory that we must develop new mores and new forms of organization to keep the family abreast of our other modern developments, therefore, entirely misses the point. You cannot cure the inadequacies of institutions by institutions. Forms grow out of, and are related to content. If there were some new reality evolving within families, if parents and children were living their lives together in new ways, then a movement for modernizing our institutional habits would be in place. The content of family life, however, is not changing; it is *disappearing*. When people shall have ceased to live and to participate in the freedom of face to face association, when they shall have scattered their interests into diverse organizations throughout the great society, we cannot say that the family has altered; we can only say that it has gone. No salvaging of conjugal and filial customs, no skill exerted in promoting coöperation between the parents and the community will bring it back. All the ingenuity and resources of 'the Government' will be of little avail.

I am not one of those reactionaries who find the solution of all problems in a regression to the golden past. No era ever repeats, or can repeat another. In our own past we have struggled through many forms of crudeness, drudgery, superstition, and disease to which we should not care to return. But perhaps in one sense we have become too efficient. We have invented cunning machines to do our work for us; but the machines have in large part become our masters rather than our servants. Most of us work harder than ever to keep up with the increasing pace of life; and those who do have leisure to enjoy are finding that life is empty of many interests which were our former heritage. We have harnessed great sources of physical power; but the creative spirit of men and women is chained beneath the machines. We have set up vast corporate organizations and associations for every conceivable public function; but the life which these institutions were developed to foster is being dissipated instead.

The urge of competition between members of groups, with all its hurry and excitement, has crowded out the quieter, stabler contacts of family and community living. We have developed a stupendous civilization; but we have not learned how to use it.

While it is not necessary, in order to change one's direction, to turn completely backward, it is essential that we recall the values of the older family relationship which we are so ruthlessly destroying. For this much is certain: If the family, as Mr. Hoover believes, is the 'unit of our national life,' if it is really the 'throne of our highest ideals,' then the rest of our civilization must be fundamentally upon the wrong tack. There is no use in trying to delude ourselves with substitutes. It will do no good to harmonize domestic habits or to eliminate cultural lag when the living reality has disappeared. We cannot restore the kernel of the nut by conjuring with the shell. Instead of exorcising the failure of the family to keep pace with the rest of society, we might more logically consider the spurious acceleration of inventors, organizers, and promoters. Rather than speed up our domestic arrangements, we might choose the alternative of slowing down our entrepreneurs. For there are human relationships which are still too precious to be sacrificed, even to the god of prosperity or the law of cultural change. And these are values not merely for strengthening a traditional institution, but for life. The issue, therefore, can be settled only within the broader problem of the great society. When we have learned to live in that society as individuals, family living will come into its own.

---

---

## XVI

### MANIFOLDNESS AND UNITY IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD

---

---

OF ALL THE phases of the problem of child development perhaps the least understood and the most neglected is that of children's personalities. Our attention has been given to the more specific needs of children rather than to the more general. In schools, in scouting groups for recreation, in church schools for moral training, in medical clinics for health, in psychological clinics for mental hygiene, our assumption has been that, in caring for the child in these particular ways, we are helping him to develop as a complete and wholesome individual personality. Just what this personality is, however, and how it is fostered by such departmentalized procedures, no one has as yet clearly revealed. That subtle quality of individuality, that consistency of attitude and behavior which distinguished each child from every other, still eludes us. We do not know how to define it, much less cultivate it in a purposeful manner. The trend within all the agencies just mentioned is to make individuals better adjusted, as we say, to society, and hence, by the same token, more like one another. Those unique patterns of qualities which make one person *different* from every other are often neglected. If children's personal characteristics develop, the result may, in some cases, be reached in spite of our welfare and educational agencies rather than through their aid.

The problem is becoming more acute at present because of the increasing compartmentalization in the lives both of children and of adults. Our grandparents, with all their intellectual and material limitations and their superstitions, were probably at least unique individuals. Their individuality could be felt and cultivated through characteristic modes of self-expression which they maintained throughout the community where they lived. Nowadays most of us do not live in communities in the older

sense, but in many diverse patterns and sets of relationships; and the members of one of these groupings seldom meet the members of another or know them as individuals. In each group there are stressed certain values, traits of character, abilities, and approved forms of conduct which in other groups are ignored and sometimes flatly contradicted. The ethical code which a child learns in Sunday school is not the same as that which he is likely to practice in selling magazines. The standards pertaining to the boy or girl scout organizations are difficult to apply to the situations of a classroom. The virtues demanded at home are frequently different from those which bring an individual success upon the playground or as a member of a club or gang. Modern boys and girls are therefore faced with a difficult problem in trying to be at all times consistent individuals, possessing unique and, at the same time, integrated personalities.

The reason for all this is the fact that, under conditions of modern social organization, persons who have to do with but a portion of life are banded together to direct children with regard to that particular segment, and at times and places separate from the ministrations of those concerned with other segments. This process tends to separate the segmental interests of a child from his life as a whole, and to set these isolated interests upon a plane of importance superior to that of the entire individual. Both children and adults are members of a society which is becoming a pattern of social institutions rather than a community of freely mingling and interacting individuals. In all this narrowing and confusing of ideals where shall we turn for guidance in the training of children? To parents and teachers this problem comes home as an urgent responsibility. Surely if the values of individuality are to be preserved, if a child or a youth is to take an intelligent interest in his own career as a character to be formed, rather than a purely economic venture, some method must be discovered whereby he may work out a unity of living in the face of the manifoldness which besets him upon every side, and a stability of conduct which is dictated not by the transitory groupings in which his activities are scattered, but by himself.

## II

Coming to a closer view of the problem, there are two phases of the search for unity which, though closely related, can be distinguished for purposes of discussion. The first of these is the question of traits. By a trait I mean a unique and important habit which an individual has acquired as a constant manner of adjusting himself to numerous situations differing widely in character. Can there be fostered in children certain consistent attitudes and values which will reveal themselves in informal group associations as well as at school, at market-places as well as at home, on playgrounds as truly as in church schools? A human personality, however, may be regarded as composed of not one but many characteristics; and the free exercise of one of them may frequently conflict with the functioning of another. The second part of our task, therefore, is the organization of the various traits into a consistent individual pattern, and the resolution of conflicts within the individual. The first phase of the problem relates to the effort of an individual to be himself in all situations; the second phase concerns his efforts to be his entire self in a single situation.

Let us inquire first concerning our present success and the future possibilities in the task of the fostering of personal traits. For a quantitative and critical presentation of this phase let us turn to the important investigations on character conducted by Professors Hartshorne and May.<sup>1</sup> These psychologists have carried on an extended series of tests upon tendencies toward honesty and dishonesty among school children. Tendencies to cheat, for example, were measured by them in terms of the dishonest correcting of examination papers under circumstances where such corrections could be detected. A scale of cheating was employed which was based upon the degree of difficulty or hazard which the particular act of cheating involved. Stealing was measured by

---

<sup>1</sup> Hartshorne, H., and May, M., *Studies in Deceit, Studies in Service and Self Control*, and *Studies in the Organization of Character*: three volumes published under the title of *Studies in The Nature of Character* (Character Education Inquiry of Columbia University and The Institute of Social and Religious Research). Published by Macmillan Company, 1928-1930.

the value of coins taken by the child from a box ostensibly designed as a puzzle which was given him to solve. Lying was measured by the tendency of the subject to answer questions concerning his conduct in ways which would reflect credit upon himself, but would at the same time exceed the actual degree of socially approved conduct which could be expected of an ordinary person. A finding of this investigation which is stressed by the authors is the surprisingly low correlation between tendencies toward honesty or dishonesty in differing situations. That is to say, the fact that a child showed, in the May-Hartshorne experiments, no tendency to lie or to cheat on an examination would constitute no reliable proof that he would not steal money when presented with the task of solving the coin-box puzzle. Tests representing different situations elicited different average amounts of cheating in the same groups of subjects. A scale, therefore, could not logically be constructed for measuring dishonesty which involved more than one type of situation. Even in tests where the situations were closely similar but with different test materials employed, the correlations, though higher, were still so low as to preclude any great certainty in the prediction of a child's behavior upon one occasion from his behavior upon another. The tendency to cheat or not to cheat seemed to depend largely upon circumstances, or upon such factors as the code of ethics accepted in a certain schoolroom, rather than upon a constant trait in the particular child. To quote from the conclusions of these writers: "Honesty or dishonesty is not a unified character trait in children of the ages studied, but a series of specific responses to specific situations."<sup>2</sup>

What a blow to leaders in the field of moral and religious education! Honesty, and perhaps, by that token, other character traits as well, might be interpreted by some, upon the basis of this evidence, as pure fictions—at least so far as the formative period of a child's life, extending up to adolescence, is concerned. Let us consider the consequences which such an interpretation would involve, if true, for the problem of personality in children. Honesty, according to this view, does not inhere in an enduring trait

---

<sup>2</sup> Hartshorne and May, *Studies in Deceit*, Book II, p. 243.

among children, but is an index of the particular situations in which children have developed or have been taught specifically honest habits. Hence we should speak not of an honest child, but rather of an honest social situation. What, then, is the use of trying to train children to be honest as *individuals*? An honest *child* is a pure myth; the best we can do is to canvass every type of human situation and see that responses of honesty are inculcated in a child as habitual reactions in each. The utopia of 'an honest world' would then be achieved; not, however, by making people honest but by making honesty, as it were, a part of the social structure. Our whole problem thus shifts from individuals to the social order. Individuals, according to this program, would not learn in youth to be moral; they would merely transmit a moral order which is considered to be derived not from individuals, but from 'Society.'

That the May-Hartshorne findings may be used to arrive at so absurd a conclusion, which the authors themselves have probably never intended, is not due to any lack of care or thoroughness in the collection of their data, but to the manner in which their conclusions are likely to be interpreted. The fallacy lies in the inference that, since most of the subjects studied did not show a consistent trait of honesty, it is impossible that such a trait can, in a general way, exist. The findings are thus generalized into a natural law relating to personality, comparable to the laws which have been tentatively established concerning the growth of intelligence or physical capacities. Such a generalization is not justified. Personality trends do not depend exclusively upon such stable organic factors as the capacities just mentioned; they are a product also of the life history of an individual, and they reflect an infinitely varied and individualized experience. Genetically, they are also, in part, a pattern of fortuitously combined events. A river, in making its way to the sea, cuts out a valley of a characteristic and unique configuration. In the course of this geological process the operation of many natural laws has been involved; yet there is, so far as human knowledge goes, no general law determining that this particular river must 'bring into play' all these different natural laws at exactly the times and

places where they actually operated. Similarly with personality, we can discover no general law dictating in advance whether, in a particular individual, certain definite and consistent traits will or will not be formed. Each case must be considered as the unique product of the particular organic equipment of an individual operating in a particular environment. This, however, is far from saying that such constant individual traits *cannot* be developed. Professors May and Hartshorne, I believe, would themselves prefer that their conclusions be accepted not as the statement of a natural law of personality or character, but as reflecting the manner in which the habits of honesty in the groups they studied happened to have been conditioned. Such a dissociation in the conditioning of honest habits in varying situations may, it is true, be approaching universality in our present society; but even this possibility would not prove that there is a negative or societal determinism in personality, that it would be physiologically impossible for generalized traits to develop in childhood. If one wishes to train a child in such a way that no element of response in one situation will carry over to another, one can in some measure do so; and the resulting individual will appear to be a confirmation of the hypothesis we have been discussing. On the other hand, if one wishes to train a child to reflect upon his experiences, to recognize certain common threads running through his behavior in widely differing situations, and to develop his reactions still more consistently in that direction,—in other words, if one desires to encourage the development of a general and characteristic trait of personality, that too can probably be done. That there were at least a few individuals who maintain a constant level of honesty throughout differing tests is a fact which the results of Hartshorne and May will themselves reveal.

One of the most significant contributions of the study we are discussing lies, it seems to me, in the revelation of the kinds of characters, or perhaps the lack of character, which our present educational methods seem to be fostering. Although this study did not prove that a general trait of honesty *cannot* be formed in children, it did suggest that, in the large majority of individuals studied, such a trait *had not* been formed. If one may judge from



the results of this investigation, children in our public schools seem to have been conditioned, on the whole, toward specific rather than general attitudes in regard to honesty in varying situations. If this is true, a child is taught to be honest as a becoming part to play in *a certain situation*, and not as a step in the formation of a trait which he is to carry with him everywhere throughout life. As a possible index of the status of character training in America today these experiments acquire, in my opinion, a new and at the same time a disquieting significance.

### III

The first principle in the search for unity among manifoldness lies in the discovery of certain common elements which are present in many situations differing otherwise in detail. In terms of behavior psychology, the problem is to find in complex situations some common stimulus to which a single, consistent response can be attached. A dog, previously to any special training, probably makes three different kinds of response, respectively, to food when hungry, to the sound of a bell, and to a bright flash of light. We have here a condition analogous to the specific habit of a child, such as cheating, stealing, or reacting honestly, which Professors May and Hartshorne found to obtain in differing situations. Just as the dog may react to the sound of the bell by turning his head, and to the flash of light by blinking and running away, so the child may react to the examination by cheating, and to the coin puzzle by a faithful return of the property. Now let us suppose that, by using Pavlov's well known technique, that is, by ringing the bell a number of times simultaneously with the presentation of the food, we develop in the dog a conditioned response. The flow of saliva which ordinarily follows only the sight or odor of food now comes to follow the ringing of the bell. Let us perform the same experiment with the flash of light, instead of the bell, as the conditioning stimulus. We shall now observe that the three stimulating situations, food, bell, and light, evoke not completely differing responses, but, in part, at least an identical reaction, the secretion of saliva. By having a common element, the presence of food, as a part of each of the two

other situations, represented by the bell and the light respectively, the behavior in these two latter situations becomes in a degree consistent, rather than wholly diverse.

To apply our rather crude illustration to the development of traits, we have only to replace the salivary reaction of the dog by the response which a child has learned to make to some important initial stimulus, for example, a particular human being. Let us imagine a child in a class in Sunday school. During his presence in such a class he learns attitudes conducive toward honesty as a part of that situation. If entrusted with money, for example in handling the collection basket, he will be taught to make a faithful accounting of his trust. It is important to note that the conduct he here performs is a response not only to the church setting, the words or music of the service, and the money of the collection, but largely also to a particular individual, his Sunday school teacher. Let us suppose now that the same child is engaged in selling newspapers on the street, or in taking an examination in school. Will he be honest toward his customers and toward other newsboys? Will he refrain from cheating in his examination when by cheating an objective important to him can be attained? The entire setting of his work as a newsboy is so different from the Sunday school room that he may be led to develop habits in the former relationship of a very different character from his habits in the latter. Although honest as a Sunday school pupil, he may be dishonest as a newsboy. But let us suppose that, as he is about to give short change to a customer, he looks up and sees that this customer is not alone but is accompanied by his (the boy's) Sunday school teacher. In such a circumstance it is not improbable that his dishonest act will be inhibited, and a beginning made towards a habit of honesty in his business dealings as well as in church. Again, in the school room, if the examination questions are a part of a wholly different situation, evoking habits which are peculiar to the standards of that time and place, dishonest behavior may result. But if we suppose that the boy's Sunday school teacher is also his school teacher, this common element of the stimulus situation may again bring forth the honest response and facilitate its transfer to the new and

different situation of the classroom. Just as we should not expect the dog to develop the same response to light as he does to the bell without the presence of a common accompanying stimulus, the sight of food, so we cannot expect the child to form a habit of reacting consistently toward differing situations in the absence of some important stimulus common to them all.

If the reader doubts the significance of this analysis, let him recall the humorous and sometimes embarrassing situations which spring up out of the presence of a minister in unexpected places. I know a clergyman of repute who says that he usually travels without his clerical vestments in order that the flow of conversation in the smoking-rooms of Pullman cars may not be diverted by his ecclesiastical appearance. Many of us form one set of habits in the presence of our ministers, and another set in the contacts of business and social life. Our behavior here is inconsistent; and if all our habits were so compartmentalized, we should indeed have no general and characteristic traits of personality. We should then be creatures of specific situations. Such inconstancy, however, probably results from our growing modern tendency to segregate ourselves into different groups for different purposes. These groupings become institutionalized; their members do not move about freely and intermingle as in the older days of community living. Since people stay, as it were, in their fixed ruts, there is little opportunity for them to see one another as complete individuals in a variety of differing situations, and so to provide for themselves in these situations an element of stimulation common to them all. As against these prevailing tendencies, I am contending that the development of consistent habits by which an individual can maintain his own character in differing situations is a possibility; and that there exists a definite psychological process and type of human association through which such a possibility can be realized.

There is a conception of the term 'trait' which is vague and mysterious. It is the notion that a trait is a quality, or essence, which pervades and determines all an individual's acts. This kind of determinism, it seems to me, is as misleading as the opposite position, that is, the denial of traits altogether. With any in-

vestigation which will help us to be more critical in this matter I am in full accord. The analysis which I am here presenting, however, is not concerned with the trait as an essence which flows into everything the individual does, but only with the empirical question of whether an individual has or has not acquired during his life certain general characteristics by which his behavior in novel situations may be, with some success, predicted. Traits of this sort, moreover, may differ in individuals, and their differences may be susceptible to a kind of measurement. Such measurement, however, will not be the determination of the amount of some abstract quality or essence pervading the individual, but simply the enumeration of the differing situations in which the attitude or the response in question may be expected to occur.

#### IV

With this revised conception of a trait we may perhaps accomplish some useful results in the guidance of children's personalities. It will be seen that in order to foster the development of consistent traits we must prevent the experience of a child from being broken up into group situations or institutional alignments which have nothing in common. We must permit him to react in a community situation where certain other individuals are present in many relationships of life, and not merely upon isolated occasions and in specialized rôles such as those of teacher, play-group leader, minister, and employer. The principle of unity among manifoldness can best be provided by responses to the behavior of other human beings who do not shift kaleidoscopically with every situation, but who, in the rôle of common stimulus maintain a constancy of their presence and their personalities throughout. If this view is correct, our tendency to employ experts and specialists for each phase of a child's activity and each of his needs may, if carried too far, entail more harm than benefit. If we believe in the development of consistent traits in an individual's personality, it will be better for the parent not to leave the affairs of teaching solely to the teacher, but to allow his own influence to carry over into the educational field. It will be better if the teacher is not alone a dispenser of knowledge,

but a companion upon the playground, an adviser in economic relationships, and a friend whose personality may at times be felt even within the sacred precincts of one's home. In order to help the child to develop individuality, to be himself in all situations, and to provide his own standard of conduct rather than shift with the code of each grouping with which he happens to be in contact, we must fight against the segmentalizing of human living. We must restore a more fluid, face to face relationship,—a community of whole individuals in which unique and self-consistent behavior shall be possible of attainment.

## V

We come now to the second task in the cultivation of personality among children. It is necessary to give a child a chance not only to be himself in all situations, but to express as far as possible all of himself in a single situation. The problem here is partly that of avoiding conflicts between traits developing within a child's own nature as they tend to be evoked in the complex situations of life. It is a problem also of integrating the interests of an individual, of selecting a vocation or avocation in which all fundamental desires and habits may be expressed and none thwarted. How, for example, can a child find a means of being *wholly* himself, when his being that self demands that he be both ascendant in all his social relationships and at the same time unselfish and thoughtful of the interests of others? There are probably scores of such traits, often conflicting, within a single individual, tendencies which must all receive expression, which must be developed together into one harmonious pattern. As a single illustration I might allude to the conflict between our various normative values. Consider the several claims of the pursuit of scientific knowledge, the love of the beautiful, and the aspiration toward the good. Frequently these normative tendencies run at cross purposes with one another, and a selection and precedence must ensue. How can we find acts, occasions, or environments in which all three of these fundamental interests may be expressed at one time, and none neglected or thwarted? The arrangement of tasks in school and home as well as the choice of curricula and play

activities may well be studied from this standpoint. While I can offer here no final and guaranteed method, let me refer, as an illustration of what I mean, to one of the parables of a certain great teacher. The story of the Good Samaritan, I believe, contains far more wisdom than is usually brought to light in religious education. To appreciate its full significance we must see in it not merely an aspiration toward the ideal of goodness, but a striving for an experience of the true and the beautiful as well. The deed narrated, to be sure, was essentially an act of kindness to a fellow creature in sore need; but it also reveals an aesthetic value. A human organism in its healthful state is beautiful to contemplate; and the restoration of a human being to wholesome, normal functioning is therefore a work of the creation of beauty. The Good Samaritan was not only 'good,' he was artistic as well. The processes of healing, moreover, are connected not only with welfare and the aesthetic interest, but with an appreciation of those orderly sequences which we call the laws of nature. In the examination of the wounds and the applying of medical remedies there was shown both a knowledge of such matters and the possible expression of an interest in natural processes in and for themselves. The Good Samaritan may well have been a scientist as well as a benefactor and an artist. When approached in this manner any object of a child's attention, whether human or otherwise, will offer greater opportunity for the play of his various interests in one unified act than when presented in one context and for one specific purpose only. An educator who can endow objects and situations with this manifold significance is, in my opinion, the person who can give most aid in the development and integration of youthful personalities.

From one standpoint the two phases of our problem merge into one. It is often because one cannot exhibit a characteristic trait in all situations that one cannot be wholly one's self in a single instance. With some of the children studied by Professors May and Hartshorne, for example, the aim to excel in class standing, or the practice of conforming to the mode of their group, may have been in itself a fairly consistent habit. The classroom situation therefore might have elicited cheating not as

a manner of expressing dishonesty, but as an expression of the trait of rivalry and the desire for social recognition and approval. In the same children there might have been developing also the general trait of honesty; but the tendency to express such a trait in their conduct in examinations might have been inhibited, or blocked, by the stronger impetus toward emulation. The nature of the situation may thus be such as to produce the suppression of one trait and the dominance of another, rather than to provide a satisfactory outlet for both. In such an event the condition which may appear superficially to be an inconsistency, or a failure to be one's self in all situations, may really be an instance of inner conflict—a failure to express one's nature wholly in one situation.

I know of but one solution for this problem of personal integration; and that is the method which was also proposed for the development of the single consistent trait. There must be a reduction of the compartments and barriers of institutional habits by which a child is hedged, and the substitution of a more fluid environment, one in which he can, in a measure, select and create his own situations and find opportunities for his various traits to support rather than to oppose one another. It is because an individual finds himself in a stereotyped, 'group' situation in which he allows an ethical standard which is selected in the interest of competition or of social recognition within that group to dominate his action, that he finds it impossible to carry into the classroom the habit which he has learned at home or in the church. When conduct becomes fixed and compartmentalized we must expect these thwartings within individual personalities to follow. A *modern* Good Samaritan, I fear, has learned to call upon his 'institutions,' to invoke the personnel of the courts, of charitable agencies, and of public clinics, for the contacts with human realities which he otherwise might make in person. It is because he divides his activities into these separate groupings, instead of addressing himself as a whole individual to the task of dealing with another that the parable of the great teacher can avail so little at the present day. The integration of diverse trends and interests within an individual is a delicate problem.

---

Many adjustments must be tried; and these failing, new approaches must be sought. This process of trial and error demands above all else a flexibility in human relationships. Freedom to choose one's companions and one's activities, freedom to try different modes of response without fear of ridicule or intimidation in the name of the group, freedom to meet individuals not in compartments, but in the fullness of their communal living,—these are the conditions upon which the achievement of personality depends.



---

---

## XVII

### ADULT INSTITUTIONS AND CHILDREN'S PERSONALITIES

---

---

ONE OF THE EARNEST contentions of Charles Horton Cooley was that the individual and the group should be regarded as one and the same thing. This statement has become a kind of faith or creed to which students of human problems have returned at various times when tempted to stray. Yet in spite of lip service to this creed, it is to be feared that in practice its strict application is sometimes forgotten. There has grown up a tendency to think of the social world as a kind of organism, and to picture human culture as though it were something over and above human beings, and independent of them. Hence in the practical sphere there has arisen another formula, used by social workers, by teachers, by parents, and by nearly all who have to do with the training of children, to the effect that we should endeavor to *adjust the individual to society*. This apparently harmless formula, which we have come to accept as a sort of truism, it is my present purpose to challenge. When we speak of adjusting the individual to society, we probably mean in stricter logic the adjusting of the individual to himself and to other individuals. Someone may say, of course, that this amounts to the same thing. But I think that it is not the same; for there are occasions when we use the conception of the social order in such a manner as to mean not individuals, but something else. In particular, this is true when we think of the things which we call our social institutions, of government, education, business, industry, religion, and the family. There is a tendency to regard such social aggregates as these as something different from and greater than individuals.

My purpose here is to bring to bear upon this accepted formula three main considerations which may be stated as follows: First, the notion of 'adjusting individuals to society' may lead to the impression of a social world over and above individuals, a concept

which obscures our view of what is really happening to the individuals concerned. And in this obscurity those of us who are grown up are probably more deeply involved than are the children whom we teach. Second, success in adjusting the individual to social institutions does not meet the full need for guidance on the part of a child. Third, we cannot always deal successfully with a child's personal problems by adjusting him to the social order, because we do not know what the social order will be when he is grown up.

Human behavior is made up of two general classes: the free, spontaneous, face to face behavior in which we can express and develop our personalities, and the common, or like, behaviors in which we behave like everyone else. The latter type, the like or common behaviors, is a part of the psychological reality of our institutions. Let us now inquire how, with respect to these two general categories, a young child reacts to his social environment. I believe that, prior to any teaching in regard to institutions, he reacts only by the direct, face to face type of behavior in which the entire personality is capable of being expressed. He gives his approval or his condemnation as he sees fit, without regard to the customary approval or disapproval. He reacts to people as unique individuals, not as beings having a fixed social rôle or status in which they are treated in the same manner as everyone in their given class. He regards them as specific persons who react to him or to whom he reacts.

This primitive viewpoint of childhood is illustrated by the following experience of mine in dealing with two boys. One of these lads, whom I shall call Richard, was eleven years of age; the other, my own son Edward, was two years younger. One day when Richard and I were taking a trip alone in my automobile, I gave him, half playfully, a peremptory order. He replied: "I won't do it. I don't have to mind you. I only mind my father."

"Why don't you have to mind me?" I asked.

"Because," he answered, "you are not in the same family."

This ingenious reply gave me the idea of trying the same question on my own boy to see what response might be elicited from another child at a somewhat younger age. Accordingly when I

could arrange a confidential interview with Edward, I inquired: "Do you mind Mr. W.?" (indicating Richard's father).

"No," he answered promptly.

"Why don't you mind him?" I continued.

"Because I don't have to," he replied with assurance.

Again I queried: "Why don't you have to mind him?"

*"Because I don't have to, that's all!"*

As I reflected upon this conversation I gradually came to the conclusion that Edward was right. The reason why he did not mind Mr. W. was simply because he did not have to; he had never been made to do so by punishment or other coercive means. And that was all there was to it.

We have here two contradictory points of view in regard to society. That of the older boy was somewhat conventionally sophisticated; but, being less naïve, it was perhaps for that reason less profoundly true, than the view of the younger. To state our problem in terms of the psychological and genetic background of the case, the reason why Richard felt he had to mind his own father was not because his father was in the same family (this was a kind of rationalization in institutional terms), but because he had been punished, and knew that he would in the future be punished again, for not minding. Richard, however, was old enough to know the relationships of other men to their sons and to realize that practically all of them would give their moral support to his own father (for example, in a trial before a judge in the juvenile court) in his father's insistence upon the obedience of his son. Even through court action, however, Richard would not have to mind because his father was in the same family, but because the judge had some means of punishment at his disposal which in the end would prove effective. In using such punishment the judge might say that he was doing it with the motive or reason of 'enforcing the law,' of 'maintaining our customs,' of 'upholding family life,' or of 'representing Society.' Still, these 'laws' and 'customs' and this directing 'Society' are, as it were in the judge's own head, or in the heads of people generally; they do not, and so far as we know, cannot themselves come into coercive contact with the boy. So far as human observation goes,

it is not the legal statutes nor the 'family' as an institution which actually *makes* the boy obey; but the whip, or treatment through the reform school or the prison cell. Speaking in terms of Richard as an organism, the reason why he obeyed his father was, therefore, precisely the same as Edward's reason, *because he had to*.

But where, one asks, does the family come in? The family, in this institutional or legal sense, may be thought of as a convenient formula and procedure for making our children obey us, and for gaining the support and approval of other parents in this matter. It is a kind of pact among parents in society, and, on the whole, a useful one. But still, it is not the pact but the *parent* who actually coerces the child. Of these more complex social relationships and formulas Edward obviously knew very little. He was unsophisticated. But perhaps for that very reason he saw the concrete facts a little more clearly than the older boy.

The various conceptions which children have about social institutions in a concrete situation are illustrated by the result of the following crude but interesting experiment. A student of psychology prepared a story of an episode which, though familiar in general context to all, had its institutional settings and relationships badly confused. Securing access to a group of children, ranging in age from seven to fifteen, in a nearby church school, he read them this story. Before commencing he said, "I am going to read you a story. I think there is something wrong with it. If you find anything wrong, let me know when I am through." The story ran as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Once there was a policeman who slept all day in his house. He never went out in the daytime, but only at night. He wore a brown suit and a red necktie. Sometimes he wore a hat and sometimes he wore a cap drawn down over his forehead.

One night he crept out of his house and went down the street in the dark until he came to a store. All the lights in the store were turned out, because the storekeeper was at

---

<sup>1</sup> For the use of this material and of the conversation following I am indebted to Dr. Arthur Jenness.

home in bed. He stopped to see if anyone was coming. He looked up the street and down the street, but he couldn't see anybody at all. Then he went around in the alley to the back door. The door was locked, but he broke the lock and went in. He felt his way about until he came to the cash register. Then he reached in and took the money. He put the money in his pocket and felt his way to the door.

In the alley a robber was walking along and whistling. The robber saw the policeman come out of the door and he grabbed the policeman and held him.

"What were you doing in that store?" the robber asked.

"I was only looking for the storekeeper to ask him if I could have a job in his store," said the policeman, trembling.

"I don't believe you," said the robber. "Let me search you."

"I won't," said the policeman and he tried to get away. The robber held him tightly. He felt in the policeman's pockets and found the money.

"Where did you get all this money?" asked the robber.

"I don't know how it got there," said the policeman. "Someone must have put it there for a joke."

"Come along with me," said the robber and he took the policeman to the hospital. The policeman went to bed in the hospital. He slept all night and when he woke up in the morning the robber was waiting for him. The policeman put on his clothes and then both of them ate breakfast.

Then the robber took the policeman to the church. The minister was sitting in the pulpit and the choir was in the loft.

The robber went up to the minister and said, "I caught this man stealing money in a store last night."

The minister looked very severe and said to the policeman, "Did you steal this money?"

The policeman was going to tell another lie and say he was only looking for a job, but he knew he would have to confess later on; so he said, "Yes."

The minister looked up at the choir and said, "You have heard what this man said. Do you think he is guilty?"

The people in the choir got up and went into a little back room behind the organ. In a minute they came back and one of them stood up, while the others sat down in the choir loft.

"Please, Mr. Minister," he said, "we think he is guilty."

"All right," said the minister.

He looked at the policeman very sternly. Then he pointed his finger at him and said, "You must go to school and stay there for two years."

The policeman began to cry, but the robber took him out of the church and put him in the school.

The report of the investigator who was conducting the experiment continues as follows:

Soon after beginning the story it was noted that several of the older children smiled; but no one made any noise until I came to the place where the robber took the policeman to the hospital. Then several of them laughed aloud slightly. When I had finished, a girl of about twelve said, "I know what was wrong."

"What was it?" I asked.

"The policeman should have caught the robber, instead of the robber catching the policeman."

"But why shouldn't the robber catch the policeman?" I asked.

"Because policemen *catch* robbers."

"Do they?" I asked. "Well, why do they catch robbers?"

"Because that's their job."

I asked, "Do policemen catch robbers just for fun?"

"No. They do it because they have to."

"Why do they have to?"

"Because they get paid for it."

. . . . .

"Why did the robber take the policeman to the *hospital*?" I asked.

"Probably because he was hurt," said a boy.

"Why did the robber take the policeman to the church?"

A girl answered, "Because he had been bad."

"What do you mean by saying he was bad?"

Another girl answered, "He broke a law."

I asked, "Why is it bad to break a law?"

One girl immediately answered, "Because if one person could break a law and it wasn't bad, then everybody could break the laws and robbers could steal everything we had."

. . . . .

I asked, "If you did something wrong and a policeman caught you, would he take you to a minister?"

"Yes," said one of the girls.

"No," said a boy. "He would take you to a police station." There seemed to be quite a bit of disagreement on this.

I asked the girl, "Why should a policeman take you to a minister?"

"Because he knows what is right and wrong."

All of the children seemed to overlook the fact that I had confused a minister and a choir with a judge and jury.

"Can a minister send anyone to jail?" I asked.

Several children said, "But he didn't send the man to jail. He sent him to school."

"Why did he send him to school?" I asked.

"Because he didn't know anything," said a girl.

"Is that the reason?" I asked the children.

"Yes," they said in chorus.

The responses to this story, as indicated by the account just given, contain a queer mixture of naïveté and shrewdness. In the reply that policemen catch robbers because they are paid for it, we can give the child who made it credit for a realistic and sagacious answer. An older person might have said: "We have laws. Our legislators make these laws, the courts administer them, and the police carry out the orders of the courts. Therefore policemen catch robbers." Would this formula, however, have been as fundamental an answer as that which the child gave? Or again, let us consider the explanation of why it is bad to break a law. Here is a mere child who says it is bad to break a law, not merely because it is a law, but *because we consider it so*; that is, because, if people could break these laws without being considered wicked (and punished), those of us who have property would suffer. Good and bad, in her simple yet profound conception, are concepts for the service of human beings in society, rather than the absolute will of society itself. As children grow older these naïve but true notions of human relationships often become obscured by thinking in terms of institutions, which are felt to be over the heads of individuals, controlling their thoughts and actions. They then

begin to think of law as a kind of stern parent. There occurs an emotional conditioning to institutional symbols and a fear of them which few of us ever completely shake off.

Some will say that I am here merely fighting a straw man. As grown-ups we all know that institutions are only abstract notions and not persons; and we do not deceive ourselves if occasionally we adopt a personal attitude toward them. It is true that we do know this intellectually; and in our thoughtful discussions this self-deception seldom arises. But when it comes to some political crisis, some social upheaval, a war, a strike, or even an election, these emotional habits which we have possessed since later childhood are reinvoled and are used to control human belief and action with all their original compulsion.

In order to trace the growth of children's understanding of institutional behavior a little further, let us consider their attitudes regarding other institutional concepts. We may take for example the monetary system. A child, in his earliest pecuniary experiences, finds that money is like a kind of magic; it can be used to obtain almost anything he wants. He gets a notion of a monetary value or 'wealth' as something separate from the human beings who are using it. The psychology of nationalism has a similar basis and development. Through the study of history and related topics, children frequently come to believe that the Nation is something more than the individuals concerned, something to be idolized in peace and fought for in time of war. Ideas regarding family are also important. A child gradually comes to feel that his father and mother are not merely biological organisms in his environment, but that they have a definite social rôle and status. Certain images are built up in his mind concerning his parents. The father image represents a stern, but reasonably kindly, person, who insists upon strict discipline and demands courage, probity, and industry of his children. The mother image represents a character endowed with tenderness and affection, persuasive, sympathetic, and willing to sacrifice herself for those whom she loves. Boys and girls are supposed to have definite attitudes toward their parents in keeping with these images. Such images and common ways of behaving toward



parents, together with attitudes of parents toward children and of children toward one another, are often regarded as making up the institution of the 'family.' Institutions are thought to compel people, as it were, to play these rôles which society has fastened upon them.

In certain cases such rôles may accurately fit the individuals who must enact them; but in many instances they are used only for the emphasis or control of particular forms of reaction. Frequently the customary images are contrary to fact; the institutional status assigned to parents may not represent their actual personalities or motives at all. We may witness the exploitation of these stereotypes not only in family life, but in the community outside the home. I am thinking not merely of control through court procedure and similar agencies (which are often helpful) but also of economic profiteering. 'Mother's Day,' for example, represents an exploitation of an accepted parental image which many persons feel they must live up to by sending their mothers candy, flowers, or telegrams, or by other forms of commercialized greeting. 'Father's Day' also is being brought to the front now that Mother's Day has proved so profitable.

Children often think that parents should be human beings of a certain definite type, whether they are so by nature or not. The well-known 'foster-child fantasy,' in which the individual imagines that his supposed parents are not his true parents, has been found to have been indulged in by a large number of college students at some time during their childhood. Some of these persons, if their own accounts are to be credited, have even gone back to their birthplace to investigate the matter. This fantasy, in certain instances at least, probably originates from the fact that a stereotype, or image, has been built up about one's father or mother, an image which, sooner or later, has had to be broken down. The father was not the hero of our childhood dreams after all; and children have had to face that fact and make a readjustment. Unwilling to meet the situation frankly they have sought refuge, in many cases, in the realm of fancy.

Very tentatively, and more as a hypothesis for investigation

than as fact, we may say that children usually go through at least three periods with regard to their conception of the social order. There is, first, the naïve experience of the actual physical relationships, the child's awareness of his own actions toward other people and of the things they do to him. There is here involved no notion of institutions or of institutional controls. Secondly (and somewhat later), the child learns the meaning of institutional symbols. This is frequently, in part at least, an emotional conditioning. It is an age when he is quick to believe in the reality of the 'Nation,' the 'Gang' or the 'Family' as apart from, and more than, individuals. He is highly idealistic and not very critical. Finally, there arrives the mature period in which one learns the more rational aspects of the folkways and the customs of one's people. A youth now understands something of the *functioning* and the purpose of government, law, and other institutions. He goes beyond a purely emotional response to the symbol and achieves a more adequate, intellectual picture of his social world. He still retains, however, a kind of emotional susceptibility to symbols which tend to depict the institutions as a realm which is greater and more powerful than individuals. It is in his freedom from these encumbering fictions that a young child is often wiser than a man.

## II

In evaluating the goal of adjusting the individual to society, we are hampered by the fact that it does not provide us with a means for measuring our success in attaining it. In many instances of course, we have a fair *partial* measure; for if an individual can be adapted to the requirements of the institutions under which he must live, then a large part of the problem is solved. Such seems to be the case by contrast in many instances of broken homes, of desertion, and of juvenile delinquency. Frequently a child has been allowed to run wild, and has formed habits of satisfying his needs in ways which do not take into account the welfare of others. Delinquents, as a rule, are singularly detached from the ordinary institutional or 'common segment' behaviors and relationships of life. They often

have no home life worthy of the name, they have broken off through truancy their contacts with their guides and teachers in the schools, they do not go to church or to Sunday school, their health is not guarded by regular visits to doctors, nor by attendance at medical centers or clinics. They are derelicts, in short, so far as the influence of the common habits which make up our social organization is concerned. Hence a necessary part of the treatment consists in trying to bring the individual back into these institutional ways. The attempt is made to secure for the delinquent a good home, to insure his attendance at school and church, and to make him in other ways a more 'conforming' citizen of his community.

But although this treatment usually helps, in that it reduces friction and produces harmony between the individual and those about him, it is not in all cases the final or even the most satisfactory solution. Take, for example, a person reared in an area of alien culture and among the institutional habits of another country. Coming suddenly into the new cultural environment, his old way of thinking, feeling, and living produce sharp contrasts with the new. According to the formula of 'adjusting the individual to society' the problem now lies in making him conform to the cultural habits of those about him. Through a course in Americanization or citizenship we endeavor to retrain his habits and to adjust him to our own ways of living in such a manner that he will no longer be a problem. In some instances this may be accomplished outwardly, while there may be left within him many unresolved conflicts. He may not have received the guidance necessary for his remaking as an individual. Enforcing conformity to an institutional pattern will control his 'common-segment' behaviors; but it will not guide the developing expression of the desires, ambitions, and motives of his personality in the new world to which he has come. There are also instances of families in which the husband and wife have differing notions and differing early training regarding familial institutions. This may lead to a conflict situation which results in a loss of contact between the parents and children and an eventual disruption of family relationships. Here the question arises: What

do we mean by adjusting the child to society? Shall we adapt him to the institutional habits and sentiments of his father or of his mother? If we could secure his undivided allegiance to either pattern, would that solve the problem in an adequate way for the individual concerned?

From this standpoint let us consider the interesting case of the 'Marx Family' presented by Professor Ernest W. Burgess in *The Family* for March, 1926. The father of this household held the firm and emotional conviction that a family ought to be a very rigid affair, and that the father should wield complete authority over the children, demanding of them strict obedience at all times. He had acquired this notion from his own early life in Germany where it had been the traditional pattern of his forebears. His conviction in this direction had been strengthened by his experience with discipline in the army. The mother, on the other hand, was an American girl who had been reared according to very different traditions. Her feeling was that family life should be the meeting ground for a group of persons held together by mutual loyalty, and should provide helpfulness, respect, affection, and a democratic status for all. In the conflict, figuratively speaking, between these two familial concepts the children were left in a sad predicament. There were three boys. The eldest, who was somewhat of a black sheep and a weakling, continually got into trouble in the community and presented a difficult problem for his father, who knew of no way to deal with him except by force. The two younger boys had tried to break away from the family discord and had derived *their* notion of what family life should be from the home life of other boys in the neighborhood.

This case was analyzed in the account cited as a conflict of familial patterns. The struggle between these different institutions of the family, or rather between the different ways of conceiving the institution, had, according to Professor Burgess, produced discord, loss of helpful contact with the children, and problems arising between the members of the family and the neighborhood. This, of course, is one way of looking at the matter. I wish, however, to invite attention to a somewhat different

interpretation. It is possible to approach this case by asking not what were the patterns of family life which governed, or competed for ascendancy, in this family, but what each individual was trying to do as a single human personality. Approaching the matter in this way, we might discover that the father held his particular belief in regard to family discipline because he himself was inclined to be a domineering person. Because of his inferior education and social standing he may have had little opportunity to express this trait of ascendance in social relationships at large; but at home he had the opportunity and he sought to use it. He himself said that in his own family he was going to keep on with the methods which had been traditional in his family line: that he was going to do just as his father and grandfather had done. This does not mean, however, that we must regard this traditional 'family pattern' as the *cause* or the *determinant* of his behavior. It is quite as probable that it was used as a means of self justification. In other words, he may have rationalized his position by referring to it as a tried and traditional method of family life.

When we turn to the boys it becomes even clearer that they were not interested primarily in exemplifying any definite institutional pattern; for, having known no previous background of family life, they did not have any pattern to uphold. They were, instead, searching for some satisfactory *modus vivendi*; and until they looked about them in the community and saw how other children behaved toward their parents, they had no criterion to follow, but only the views of their own parents which were unworkable because contradictory. The children, then, were trying not so much to maintain their concept of the institution of the family, as to live their own lives, to follow their interests, and to gain their normal personal satisfactions. In the case of all the members of this family, we shall, I believe, gain a clearer view of the situation if we think in terms of the drives and wishes of the separate persons involved than if we concern ourselves with a number of 'family patterns' which seem to be in mutual conflict.

Taking the view that this problem was wholly one of conflict

between institutional, familial patterns, we should have to conclude that it could have been solved merely by adopting one of the patterns and letting the others pass into disuse. For upon this assumption the difficulty lay not so much in any particular pattern (they had all been respectable institutional practices at some time and place in history), but in the disorganization resulting from their conflict. In such a case we might justly inquire whether, if we adopted, for example, the family standards and values of the father and made the children and the wife conform peaceably to this paternal standard, the problem really would be solved. Although this would seem to be a solution logically acceptable under the given premise, few of us, I believe, would consider it to be a sound one; for the imposition of the father's pattern might mean the serious thwarting of the aims and desires of the children. They might be hampered in their self-expression precisely in the measure that they submitted their behavior and their personalities, outwardly, to the father's scheme. There would be 'social' harmony, the members of the family would be held together; but there would be discord and conflict within the individuals. Under the slogan of adjusting the individual to society we may frequently have tranquillity as between individuals, but an accompanying individual maladjustment.

Other illustrations might be given of the attempt to foster a certain notion of the family as an institution, according to the desires of the particular individuals concerned. A young woman who has been reared in a refined and cultured home, and who has always taken an interest in art, music, and literature may look forward to a marriage with an 'ideal' man who shall possess the same interests and accomplishments. In the impetuosity of courtship she may accept and marry a man she thinks to be of just this sort, but who later turns out to be very different. His main interests may prove to be athletic sports, business, industry, or in fact anything but the things upon which she places the greatest value. What shall she do? Shall she retain her old conception and ideal of the cultured family and blame her husband for not being that kind of a man? Or shall she relinquish, or at least compromise with, her ideal, and, admitting that

she was wrong concerning her husband's characteristics, frankly accept him as he is? Upon the answer to this question may depend the happiness and stability of the partners in this particular marriage.

And so with the children. If they are forced to accept the ideology of the family as it is supposed to be, if they are thoroughly engrossed with the conventional image of the attributes of parents and the relationship between parents and children, they are likely to become thwarted in their own development by inevitable discrepancies between fact and institutional conception. The potentialities which they may have for attaining certain viewpoints and for entering certain vocations may never receive fulfillment. They may be torn between desires natural to their personalities and that filial love and respect which many parents feel cannot be rendered without the conformity of the children to the pattern of the family institution as the parent or the members of the community interpret it. Among young people in college I have seen the fruits of many of these conflicts. The most vexing difficulty in securing an adjustment to a maturer view toward religion is frequently an individual's own inner conflict involved in the emotional connection between his early religious teachings and his feeling toward his parents. It is difficult to break away from childish conceptions because such views are often tied up, quite illogically, with the love of one's father or mother.

Children sometimes discover clever means of satisfying the demand for conformity to institutions, while at the same time retaining some degree of self-expression in the things they wish to do. A certain boy of nine was a model child in school. His teacher could not say enough in his praise. He was helpful and coöperative in every way. The teacher was greatly surprised, therefore, when his father called at the school and informed her that at home the lad's behavior was exactly the reverse. There he was generally mean and disagreeable; he would bully the younger children and would try to get his own way, at all costs, upon every occasion. Now the ideal maintained at the school was one of strict discipline, enforced not only by punishment,

but by rewards and recognition for any child who was obedient to the rules and helpful to the teacher. The familial slogan at home, on the other hand, was one of personal liberty and freedom of self-expression. The parents were accustomed to give somewhat unusual privileges to their children in the interests of this ideal. This boy had, it seems, taken advantage of the home situation and had carried his 'self-expression' to extremes which were trying for all concerned, as well as dubious from the standpoint of social training. Here we have two 'institutions of society,' the home and the school. The child is adjusted to one but not to the other. Should we try to get him to be adjusted to both?

I do not believe this is the way to go about it. Should we work toward the ideal primarily of securing adjustment to these institutions, we should be likely to miss the most important point. Shall we say, for instance, that the fault is with the home, and that if we can only make the home a little more like the school, good behavior in both spheres may be predicted? This is a short-sighted solution; for it might lead to the formation of traits in the child through which he would be undependable except under the conditions of school life and discipline. There would be little opportunity for growth to meet the broader experiences which his life will hold in store. In contrast with such institutionalism, the first thing to do, in my opinion, is to try to discover the reason why the boy displays these two opposite forms of behavior, why he should be self-contradictory in his actions within the spheres of home and school. In the case we are discussing, for example, it was learned that the probable reason for the boy's discrepancy of behavior in the two situations lay in a certain important trait in his own personality which seemed to be seeking an expression. This trait was the desire to gain recognition by being in some way outstanding among other children. At school he was able to do this by being the most coöperative and the best behaved boy in the room. At home, where the premium was placed rather upon originality than upon conformity, he was better able to achieve such attention by being the *worst behaved* child in the family. If then, we are led to the discovery of this one motivating trait in the child



and if we can see how such a trait, when working through different institutional situations, may produce opposite results, we have a new understanding and a new method of attack upon the problem. Our solution is now not primarily the adjustment of the child to society (except as this may follow as a result or a by-product of our endeavor), but the discovery of a means through which his dominant personal traits may receive some socialized expression. Our emphasis is now not upon the social situation or the adjustment of the child to the situation for the purpose of securing social order, but upon the attainment of a self-expression for the child in all spheres, in such a way as not to jeopardize the interests of others with whom he comes in contact.

Professor E. R. Groves has pointed out the importance of minor frictions and conflicts in family life. The family situation in which everything flows along in perfect harmony is probably to be suspected. The child may be sacrificing his own development to the maintenance of the family ideal, or to the institutional type or familial image upheld by members of the community. A certain amount of what Professor Groves calls "growing pains" seems to be necessary as an assurance that all phases of the development of the individual are receiving some recognition.<sup>2</sup> Some of the psychiatrists who have worked with problem children have come to the conclusion that, for diagnostic purposes, a 'perfectly behaved' child is to be suspected, perhaps even more than an intractable child, of some form of serious maladjustment. A so-called 'model' child may be accepting an institutional rôle as a means of avoiding responsibility and of escaping the necessity of facing problems and difficulties squarely. In certain instances such children have been found to be seeking a life of compensatory imagery, or to be developing traits of insincerity and hypocrisy. We conclude, therefore, that the formula of adjusting the child to society or to social institutions, although in some respects a useful one, is nevertheless an insufficient criterion for the guidance of children in their development as individual personalities in the social environment in which they live.

<sup>2</sup>Groves, E. R., *Personality and Social Adjustment*. Longmans, Green, and Company (1926), Chapter XII.

## III

Finally, the formula of adjusting the individual to society is inadequate as a guide for child training because, unless we accept the false doctrine that the personalities of our children are static and changeless, we do not know what the society of the future will be. In all spheres of life we find examples of the so-called transformation of 'society.' When our children shall have grown up they may possess a philosophy, or philosophies, of life radically different from those under which their parents were reared. In the political field the notion of a representative democracy, attained as it were only yesterday, seems already to be breaking down. In the present complex age we no longer have a government truly representative of individuals. The business of governing has become amazingly complicated and technical. Social problems; touching millions of people, have become so intricate that we believe that only experts can handle them. Radically new and widely contrasting political experiments are being tried in various parts of the world. Now it is both futile and groundless to suppose that these political changes occur by some superhuman momentum of their own. Whether they be the work of many or of few, they must arise in all instances from the motives and the traits of particular individuals. What kind of personalities will be possible in the citizens of the future and what opportunity will exist for their characters to be expressed in an age where citizens may be submitting themselves, under new leaders, to these new forms of control? This is an issue for which, in some degree, we must prepare our own children; yet we do not see what the outcome will be. We cannot escape the problem; yet we cannot solve it. But in any case we shall probably do better if we pay greater heed to the individualities emerging in our children of today than if we attempt to harness these children to the institutional habits of yesterday.

In the field of religion, although men and women of the future will probably no longer believe in the old anthropomorphic image of a transcendent deity, it seems likely that they will retain those inner motives which we call religious. What is to be the religious trend of the future so far as individual personalities

are concerned? Our children, in evolving their own personal conceptions of religion, will be a part and parcel of the new religious age; they will, in fact, constitute that age itself. Instead of trying to project a new, or changing, society to which our children must become adapted, our problem, more logically stated, is that of helping them adequately *to find themselves*.

In industry we are faced by the sweeping effect of machine production upon the life of workers, upon the conduct of family living, and upon family relationships. Critics are pointing out the shortcomings of this over-specialized period of business, with its minute division of labor, its narrowing influences upon workers' lives, its relation to ill health, to old age unemployment, to industrial diseases, to standards of ethics, and to many other modern problems. The characters of our young people must develop, in one way or another, so as to cope with these dilemmas. Our youths must cope with the tendencies of the machine age both in their own habits and in the methods employed by economic leaders. As a part of the development and expression of their own personalities they must work out, in their own behavior, a method by which they can successfully live. This again is a question whose answer we must seek not in the adjustment of the individual to future society, but in the glimmerings of the future as revealed in the needs and tendencies of children of today.

In relationships between the sexes, in attitudes toward family life, in the double standard of morals, and in our entire moral code, the same problems are arising. Shall the morals of men and women be just alike? If so, shall the single code be that now accepted for men or that common among women? Or will there be an entirely new moral standard? What shall we teach about home and family relationships in an age in which individuals seem to be shifting from the notion of the family as a unit for procreation to the family as an arrangement whereby two people can live together congenially upon a sex basis, with children as a purely incidental result? How shall we train children for making their choice between the older relationships and families of this sort? Certainly not by thinking in terms of the 'society' either of today or tomorrow; but only

by consulting the present development of the personalities of our children themselves. Then too, what can be said of the future 'social personality' of women? Will there be any conventionally recognized characteristics of the female sex? What ideal can we hold up to the young girl of today, or should we hold up any? What kind of a woman shall we train her to be? We have nothing but the older standards to go by, and these no longer seem to apply. When my boy stubs his toe and starts to cry I say, "Be a man." When my little daughter stubs her toe and begins crying, what can I say? The connotations implied in, "Be a woman," or, "Be a lady," simply do not apply when we are coming to expect women to be hardy and courageous and to face life with the same independent outlook as men. But here again, our sons and daughters, not the 'society' into which they are to be inducted, must teach us.

There are many familiar situations of home and school in which problems of this general sort arise. How, for example, shall we teach attitudes regarding sex privacy to children? My children since babyhood have associated freely together when naked without the slightest trace of shameful feelings. What instruction shall I give them as they grow older? As a conventionally proper father, I feel that I should teach them all those habits of sex segregation which are summed up under our adult euphemism of 'modesty.' Yet their original behavior seems to me to be much more natural, sincere, and genuine than the self-consciousness involved in the customs they will have to learn. I try to meet the situation by talking to my children as follows: "You must learn," I tell them, "to associate only with members of your own sex when you are naked, because if you do not, you will get into trouble with other people. That is the way other, or at least older, people do. At any rate it is what they say should be done. So, as long as people feel that this is the right way to act, you had better do that way too." This statement, I hope, removes from the notion of custom any sanction or control as a superhuman criterion of morals. It renders impossible any objective reference to the notion of sin; it stresses only the desirability of conformity, and that merely in so far as is necessary

in order to avoid friction with one's fellows. Hence if my children, in company with their fellows (that is, with members of their generation everywhere) should wish later to change their habits and to adopt ways of living which will be in closer harmony with their own future values, they will have a feeling of complete freedom to take such a step.

These considerations illustrate the folly of thinking of institutions and customs as separate from individuals, as realities of the sort which force us to adjust ourselves to their demands. Society itself, in so far as we can sense or observe it, lies in human individuals; and the order of the future is to be made known to us in the desires, interests, and tendencies of the children who are now with us. If this general premise is correct, the following conclusions may, I believe, be legitimately drawn: First, it is well to teach institutional habits tentatively, not as something to be sacredly maintained throughout life, but as a code which may be changed later on and which is now learned merely for the sake of getting on with others. Second, it seems desirable actively to encourage our children, as they are developing into men and women, in the deliberate and thoughtful revision of their own institutional habits should they feel that such changes are needed. We may help individuals, in other words, to adjust 'society' to themselves. Third, moral sanctions, compulsions, and the notion of sin may well be removed from all adherence to custom. Fourth, we shall wisely refrain from teaching about institutions as something over and above the children's heads. The Law, one's Country, Christianity, and Civilization are terms which may well be broken down in our teaching, from the very start, into the realities of individual human participation. We may convey an impression of society not as some great reality which not only includes but also constrains individuals, but as something which lies within individuals themselves. Finally, it is desirable to refrain from conditioning the emotional attitudes of children to institutional symbols in such a way as to hamper their insight into their own future actions when functioning as members of those institutions.

If the preceding analysis is well-founded, social workers,

teachers, and parents are confronted by the need of a new and a broader conception of the relationships in which children live. They will see the need of supplementing the narrower view of a child's immediate neighborhood and family by those widely distributed and complex behaviors which we call society at large. We enter here upon a vast and intricate problem whose issues are still uncertain, a problem in which there are as yet no definite standards of judgment. For the older and more dubious objective, the adjustment of the individual to society, we are to substitute the continual revealing and realization of an individual's potentialities in the world of his fellow beings. This broader conception of social work and child guidance will require, to an unusual degree, the qualities of humanity, tolerance, and insight, a scientific attitude toward human problems, and a readiness for careful experiments which shall be conducted without bias, fear, or shame.

What principles can be set up to guide us in this difficult quest? I have none to offer. We can rely only upon frank and sincere experiments, and upon profiting by our own failures and successes. In this attempt it may be that we shall secure the most successful guidance if we learn to follow as well as to lead. In many fields we can learn more from our boys and girls than they can learn from us; for the children of the present hold within them the key to the future. Theirs are the potentialities for a personal development and a social order which we may never know.

---

---

## XVIII

### SEEING WOMEN AS THEY ARE

---

---

THAT THE NATURE of women involves an essential mystery has become one of the aphorisms of the human race. Practically everything that masculine ingenuity can think of concerning women has, at one time or another, been said. And almost every utterance has been challenged by a statement as sweeping and vehement upon the opposite side. Poets and mystics, viewing women through an erotic halo, have endowed them with some vital and cosmic principle. Dour philosophers have seen in them only irrationality, frailty, and evil. 'The man on the street' has his stock of generalizations, or stereotypes, through which he explains feminine conduct as complacently as he discusses changes of politics or of the weather. No matter if his stereotypes sometimes go wrong; he will never revise them. When female behavior defies the traditional categories, he has in reserve a final pigeon-hole: "After all, you can never tell *for certain* what a woman is going to do." As in the case of politics and the weather, a final element of unpredictability forms a part of her very nature.

Now the best way to approach any mysterious subject is by refusing to be mystified. My present purpose, therefore, is not to explain the riddle peculiar to woman's nature, but to question whether any such riddle exists. Inscrutable mysteries usually arise from clinging stubbornly to false categories as though they were infallible. The mystery, I suspect, lies not in woman's nature, but is of human making, and satisfies certain emotional demands, not clearly recognized but, nevertheless, potent. If the accepted opinion concerning the character of women is befuddled, it is, in other words, because most people wish it to be.

The root of all speculation in this matter seems to be the assumption that some basic, inborn, mental differences between the sexes *must exist*. Just as there are contrasts of anatomy and bodily function, rendering men and women physically different

and complementary, so there must be corresponding differences in their native capacities, interests, and mental outlook. The sexual function looms so large in our thinking that it colors our view of other functions as well. It is interesting, however, that the burden of these sex differences is usually placed upon the side of the woman. The traits ascribed to men are not based in our minds upon the character of sexual activity in the male. They are merely natural or standard human traits. But the case with women is different. Their peculiarities of sex function are believed to permeate their whole life, giving their thoughts, moods, and acts a cast quite different from men's. Practically nothing is said or written about the psychology of men as a group, for that would be equivalent, in popular thinking, to a treatise upon human nature. The books and articles, however, dealing with the peculiar nature of women and their place in the social order are already a formidable body of literature. Here, then, is the basic stereotype in its full form: (1) Men and women in their inherited natures are fundamentally different. (2) But it is not so much the men who are different, as the women. (3) The sexual functions in women have a potent influence in shaping all their natural tendencies.

When basic sex differences of some sort are assumed at the outset as axiomatic, it is not difficult to find them. It is not so easy, however, to prove them inductively or to find comparisons which will endure when their usefulness in bolstering up prejudice is past. What wonder, then, that a welter of contradictory and emotional utterances has been poured forth? What wonder that women have been shrouded in mystery almost as deep as the riddle of life, and forever baffling to the gaze of men? In the present state of our knowledge the assumption that there must be innate psychological differences between the sexes seems to me quite gratuitous. There is also no good reason for assuming that the sexual basis is a more potent factor in the personality of women than in that of men. That these questionable views are widely and tenaciously held is an interesting fact, and one for which I shall try later to account. I do not say that it is certain that no important innate sex differences exist; but only that the evidence for them thus far submitted is unconvincing. Barring



the primary and secondary physical characters of sex, men and women are strikingly similar in their biological make-up. Since, moreover, they are descended from the same parents and the same ancestors, their mental traits are probably inherited from both father and mother. On the whole, therefore, the hypothesis of fundamental psychological similarity is quite as reasonable as that of basic difference, and probably safer, since, generally speaking, that hypothesis is best which assumes least.

## II

The stereotype concerning the level of women's intelligence has had an interesting history. In the days before anyone thought of educating young women for professions it was considered that girls had no abilities for any career beyond that of housewife. The fact that they seemed content with their position appeared to prove the point. Even in the attitudes of modern fathers there can probably be found a trace of the conviction that it will be the *boys* who will distinguish themselves and bring honor to the family name. Seldom has a popular fallacy been more thoroughly exploded. First, women began to enter the colleges and soon revealed a capacity for scholarship equal to that of men. Thereupon arose the cry that they were working more zealously than their brothers, whose positions were already secure. But this explanation soon went by the board; for feminine scholastic achievements continue now that women are recognized as properly belonging in colleges and are participating as fully as men in extra-curricular activities. Then came the era of mental tests. Women, wherever tested, equalled their male colleagues in intelligence as measured by the psychological scales. There is at the present time no evidence that men and women differ, in any important degree, either in special capacities or in general mental ability.

A notion closely related to the intelligence myth, which was taught to college students early in the present century, and is still widely believed, is that one sex *varies* more than the other in physical and mental traits. About a century ago an anatomist, Meckel, was certain that women varied more among themselves

than did men. Thus male superiority was proved, since men approximate more closely a single (and of course perfect) type. Fifty years later, when Darwin had proved variability to be the cornerstone of progress, this doctrine that the male sex was a fixed type became a bit embarrassing. Soon the theory of a greater *masculine* variability arose. Upon this reversed assumption, it was pointed out that although men must furnish more idiots, criminals, and paupers than women, they are also sure to provide a greater number of saints, geniuses, and leaders of civilization. But as we were setting ourselves comfortably to assimilate this doctrine, a new group of investigators set to work measuring thousands of babies and testing the abilities of larger groups of men and women. And they found, between the variability indices of the two sexes—no significant difference whatever.<sup>1</sup> The higher incidence of males in asylums and prisons is now explained by the fact that the male is exposed to sharper competition than the female and has greater responsibilities to face. He is, therefore, more likely, in case of failure, to become a social burden or a menace.

But how about the geniuses? After surveying many fields it must be admitted that we find a striking disparity of the sexes in the number of creative geniuses of the first rank. Only a sprinkling of women have attained this stature. Does this prove a greater variability of men toward the upper end of the curve? Surely this conclusion is premature. It ignores the heavy influence of family and social pressure, and the fact that we tend to praise originality in boys and to discourage it in girls. I, for one, find it difficult to refrain from fostering in my small daughter the sweet conformity which, in our conventional society, will give her poise and social advantage. To encourage her, as I do my boys, to be bold and independent, and to do something new and big in the world, seems precarious and a serious risk to the child herself. Our desire for social approval frequently determines which course the child shall follow—submission to the herd, or the

---

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting account of this topic, from which the facts above cited were taken, see Hollingworth, H. L., *Vocational Psychology*. D. Appleton and Co. (1922), Chapter X (by Leta S. Hollingworth).

more difficult hazard of uniqueness in self-expression. The fact that certain women have broken away, revolting with their entire being against the conformity which was conventionally expected of them, and have made a place for themselves among the immortals, suggests that the gift itself may not be wanting, but only the early influences which direct the growing personality.

Apart from the question of intelligence and creative genius, many differences in *character* and *temperament* have been assumed to exist between the sexes. A few of the more common opinions are as follows: Woman is dominated by feeling, man by reason. Woman's knowledge of the world is intuitive; that of man is empirical or scientific. Women are interested mainly in emotional, aesthetic, or spiritual activities; men turn naturally to mechanical pursuits, science, and business organization. The general attitude of women is personal; that of men is impersonal. Women are subjectively-minded or "introverted"; men are "extroverts." As recently as 1914, one of the foremost psychologists of America wrote the following lines:

The average female mind is patient, loyal, reliable, economic, skillful, full of sympathy and full of imagination; on the other hand it is capricious, oversuggestible, often inclined to exaggeration, disinclined to abstract thought, unfit for mathematical reasoning, impulsive, overemotional. . . . Her life, therefore, has more inner unity [than man's], and she shows more readiness to devote all mental energies to one idea. But for the same reason she must be influenced by prejudices, must show a lack of logical discrimination, must be under the control of the present impressions and too little directed by the arguments which reason and memory supply.<sup>2</sup>

In the absence of reliable means of measuring characterial traits, it is impossible to pass final judgment upon assertions such as these. This much, however, is certain. If the traits listed above are intended as inborn qualities through which female nature is to be distinguished from male, I do not know of a shred of scientific evidence for their support.

<sup>2</sup> Münsterberg, Hugo, *Psychology: General and Applied*, D. Appleton and Co. (1914), pp. 232-33.

Here, as in the case of mental capacities, greater differences occur among the members of one sex than between the averages of the two sexes. Probably everyone can think of many men who exceed the medium woman in the richness of their emotional and religious life, their interest in aesthetic pursuits, and the personal character of their point of view. We also know many men who are highly suggestible and capricious on the one hand, while being patient and loyal upon the other. The "single-track mind" seems to be no peculiar possession of women. If love and marriage are their supreme goal, it must be remembered that upon success in this pursuit may depend their entire economic and social position. Surely one who considers the behavior of men in modern industry must observe that they too are often dominated, heart and soul, by one central motive. If women's goal is a fortunate marriage, men's is frequently bigger business.

But suppose it were found after careful study of the evidence (and assuming that such evidence could be secured) that these sex differences in character traits do exist. How should we then interpret them? Would they point to innate and constitutional differences between the sexes? Not necessarily. Consider the family conditions under which the early characters of boys and girls are formed. In the typical home, when a nail is to be driven, or electric wiring to be investigated, it is the boy who is usually called upon, and who undertakes the work with avidity. The girl, on the other hand, is expected to take part in the more repetitive, unskilled, and unscientific tasks of the household. Such activities, however, provide training in doing things beautifully and tastefully, and in rendering personal comfort to others. A father's interest in his sons is apt to be directed toward their skill, initiative, and success outside the family circle. His attitude toward his daughters is likely to be a more personal one. He takes pleasure in what his boy can do; but he enjoys his daughter for herself. This, of course, is merely a general picture, but it helps to explain why in adult life many men may exhibit a certain objectivity of attitude while women retain that sensitive social adjustment and that interest in personal service which were the foundations of their early life.

### III

So much then for the evidence upon which the theory of psychological sex differences is supported. Flimsy and inadequate as this evidence may be, the theory has been held with singular tenacity throughout the ages. And this fact may lead the reader to question the sweeping manner in which I have challenged it. The weight of traditional opinion would indeed be a cogent argument were it not for the following important consideration. The traits popularly ascribed to women have seldom been offered as the fruit of disinterested, scientific observation. They have been adduced, rather, as an after thought to explain the rôle which women play in our society, or to justify those who advocate some particular policy. This form of thinking is what psychiatrists call a defense mechanism. It belongs in the class of bizarre superstitions which color the views of primitive men. Its character is not logical, but compulsive. Under these conditions it is possible for the majority of the human race, or at least the majority of males, to agree upon a characterization of women which may turn out, upon investigation, to be sheer illusion. History and anthropology afford many parallels.

The clearest example of "wishful thinking" in regard to women is to be found in the economic field. In the recent rush of women into occupations previously limited to men there has occurred a conflict, organized, perhaps unconsciously, upon sex lines. The opposition to women entering these remunerative fields cannot be made, upon its face value, to appear reasonable or just. A woman should have the same right to work for her support or the support of her family as a man. When, however, the stereotype of sex difference is invoked, the matter can be stated in a different light. If women are regarded as more frail, less emotionally stable, and more in need of physical and moral protection than men, the passing of "protective" legislation, limiting their industrial work to certain hours and stipulating certain working conditions, becomes not merely an act of justice but a duty to women themselves. It is natural that, in a setting of this sort, the doctrine of sex differences should be accepted by many with an almost religious conviction.

We cannot enter here into the full merits of this issue. Much can probably be said on both sides concerning protective legislation for women in industry. In so far as proved differences between men and women exist, as in the function of child-bearing, no one would deny the necessity of regulations making suitable provision. But concerning such statements as the proneness of women to occupational diseases, their rapid fatigability, and the insuperable handicap of their menstrual function, no final conclusions may at present be stated. There is experimental evidence tending to refute these assertions as well as to support them. Without in any way prejudging these questions, we may still maintain that the frequent sweeping claims of the unfitness of women for industrial work are probably based in part upon our habits of chivalry, and in part upon a rationalization of masculine economic motives. They reflect the manner in which men have wished to see women rather than the proved nature of women themselves.

We must look, however, to a deeper origin than economic interest if we would fully understand our stereotypes in the field of sex. The complex of male superiority is a part of men's very personalities; it originates in the experiences of childhood. The earliest years of a boy's life, in both primitive and civilized societies, are usually spent under the protection and influence of the female kin. The imprint made upon a male child through the character of an affectionate and solicitous mother is often strong. He is likely, therefore, in his earliest years, to see himself and the world largely through his mother's eyes. A time comes, however, when he feels impelled to break from these influences. Renouncing the maternal viewpoint, he begins to ally himself, in his truly masculine rôle, with the father, who, in strength and worldly experience, is the dominant person of the household. This "masculine protest," as Dr. Alfred Adler calls it, now prompts the boy to recoil from the slightest suggestion of femininity in his person or conduct. The stigma of "being a sissy" is for him the worst form of anathema. He displays toward his sister, and toward girls in general, an overbearing tolerance or a mild contempt. There results that assertion of exaggerated masculine bravado which is often a trial to the other members of the family.

It is at this point that the notion of masculine superiority begins to form. Scarcely conscious at first, the idea gradually emerges into full acceptance. In striving so hard to prove himself a man, the boy whose history we have been describing is dominated by the belief that *the male sex is the superior one*. To be like a woman would be an admission of inferiority. Thus for many boys the unquestioned notion of male superiority becomes an axiom which they carry with them into adult life.

If this account is true, we can understand much of the opposition in vocational life against which women are fighting today. The boy we are considering, eager to prove his virility, has striven to rid himself of feminine qualities, and has rationalized his protest through the belief in male supremacy. So, as a man, he still clings to his beliefs concerning the status of women and upholds the dominance of males in our institutional life. Executives in many fields know the antagonism which is aroused by the attempt to place a woman in an important position heretofore held by a man; many men are deeply humiliated by having to take orders from a woman. This attitude results in an unjust discrimination against women in many fields. The struggle of women to gain higher political offices has been an uphill fight, and is still far from complete victory. A similar condition is true with regard to industrial leadership. The old ghosts are touchy; they may walk again if we give them provocation.

A corollary of the masculine protest should be noted in passing. When a boy departs from the mother-ideal, he does not necessarily renounce all that the mother has stood for. Traits of character laid down at an early age are not so easily eradicated. What such a boy really does is to deny that he possesses such traits in himself; but he continues to value them highly in others, that is, in *women*. As he approaches maturity there opens before him the doorway of our double moral standard, and the glamor of experimenting in a man's way with the forces developing within him. Again, this does not mean that he has erased from his nature those more chaste ideals which are symbolized to him through the memory of his mother. He values them; but since his is the "man's view" and he dreads being suspected of femininity, he

must seek and enjoy these ideals *in women*. It is the suggestion of a woman psychiatrist, Dr. Beatrice Hinkle, that a man seeks to live these virtues vicariously through the woman he marries. She must attain for him the moral perfection which he prizes but cannot himself achieve.<sup>8</sup> And thus appears a new feature in our complex and stereotyped image: While they are inferior to men in all the genuine "masculine" qualities, women are by nature superior in the realm of the finer feelings and moral virtues.

Hence many men believe that not only their wives, but women in general, are endowed with a higher character than men. Depravity in a woman is felt to be more monstrous than in a man, because it goes against the very nature of her being. For the same reason women must be protected from the rough and evil influences of a man-made world.

#### IV

But this is by no means the whole story. Masculine notions about women are reinforced also by the urge of sex itself. When a youth approaches maturity the protest against being associated with the "weaker" or "inferior" sex, though still coloring his intellectual judgment, ceases to be his primary motive toward women. He now *desires* women; and precisely because he is a man, and different, he aspires to attain one of them as the object of his love. It is natural, therefore, that with such great satisfaction at stake, he will adopt the view toward women which will best keep the adored one guarded as his exclusive conquest. If he were to acknowledge that there is no difference between the moral nature and natural purity of the two sexes, his insistence that his loved one should retain her virtue and reserve the joys of love-making for one man alone would lose one of its strongest rational supports. It is the accepted theory of innate moral difference which enables him to raise his proprietary attitude above the category of mere jealousy, and to place it upon a natural and moral plane. Thus the greatest obstacle to seeing women objectively is the vested sex-interest which men have in women

<sup>8</sup> See "Women and the New Morality," *The Nation*, November 19, 1924, pp. 541-48.



themselves. Love is blind in more senses than one.

If we put together two stereotypes we have previously discussed, namely, that women are superior morally to men, and that their whole life centers in the function of sex, a remarkable conclusion follows: Women are signally virtuous only because, and in so far as, they are sexually chaste. The belief is common among men that when a girl has yielded to sexual desire before marriage she has lost not only her technical status as a virgin, but also her "honor." A single performance of this act, apart from institutional sanctions, works upon a woman some special kind of moral harm, even if she is a victim rather than a willing participant. In a debate published a few years ago in the *Forum*, a Southern attorney-general told of a courtroom scene in which a girl who had been the victim of a brutal assault presented to the jury a most tragic picture. The assailant, who was later lynched, deserved death, he said, because, "he had destroyed both the body *and mind* of an innocent woman." [*Italics mine.*] The physical injuries were indeed clear, for the girl died from them later. But what was meant by the destruction of her mind is not so easy to say. There was no record of a breakdown in the nature of a mental disease. No doubt she felt an hysterical revulsion and shame because she had been brought up in an environment where a girl's virtue was held to depend primarily on her virginity. But aside from these natural reactions, it is hard to see where the "injury to her mind" existed—unless, perhaps, it was in the mind of the gentleman who described the event.

The belief in the innate purity and constancy of women is not limited to those who are mere laymen in the science of human behavior. An eminent psychologist has recently published a theory involving a similar assumption. Men, he says, are more generalized in their physical sex desire than women. Nearly all women are capable of becoming objects of desire to the average man. Women, however, experience in the presence of the male sex generally only a vague pleasurable excitement, their specific sex desire being restricted to one man in particular.<sup>4</sup> This theory reminds us of another common dictum, namely, that men are more passionate

<sup>4</sup> Dunlap, Knight, *Social Psychology*. Williams & Wilkins Co. (1925), pp. 36-40.

sexually than women. If these characteristics are intended as innate sex differences, we must reject them as devoid of scientific foundation. That they reflect the way men and women *frequently behave* no one would deny. But here we may be observing the effects of the masculine stereotypes upon women, rather than the nature of women themselves. It is peculiar logic to set up a double moral standard which women could not with impunity violate if they would, and then ascribe their conformity to it to a mysterious constancy inherent in womanhood. We place women upon a pedestal; then we cover the pedestal from view and assume that they maintain their elevation through a special virtue of their own.

To such naïve assumptions the only reply is: Give women an opportunity to assert their own potentialities for moral behavior apart from the pressure of conventional social expectation. I might refer some of our women-worshippers, for example, to co-educational colleges where the 'heavy hand of tradition,' including the double moral standard, is coming to be more lightly regarded. But there is no need of restricting our observation to the colleges. The experimenting which is going on everywhere among our young people at the present day suggests that, under different conditions, the sexual impulses of women might be quite as generally and vigorously aroused as those of men. On the whole, therefore, I mistrust the doctrine of the more conventional moral nature of the fair sex. It seems not so much a conclusion from observed facts as a rationalization for the wishes of conventional males.

With the abdication of this stereotype must go also the notion that women are in greater need of protection against moral evils than men. Because of its false assumptions the prevailing code is bound to stultify women precisely in the measure in which it guards them. The custom (or necessity) which prevents women, in some regions, from being abroad alone after nightfall shuts them out from an interesting segment of human life. The laws which in a number of our states bar women from employment in public places after ten o'clock at night afford another notorious example. Such laws originate not merely in the economic com-

petition for jobs between men and women and in the stereotype that women, being more frail than men, must be guarded against long hours of work, but in the feeling that the morals of women must be protected by keeping them from exposure during the hours given over to masculine depravity.

We begin now to see that the character men have ascribed to women has deeper significance than that merely of a bad guess. Though, like a guess, it has little discoverable relation to the truth, it proceeds not from mere chance, but from some of the most powerful human motives. Whenever we close our eyes to the scrutiny of facts and substitute our own guiding fictions, it is because we have some cherished interest at stake. And men on the whole have seen women not as they are, but as men wish them to be. Gentle, sympathetic, conventional, admirably fitted for home life, distinguished by virtues not of intellect but of character, needful of constant protection from moral shock—this picture of woman not only gives an aggressive male the fullest opportunity for his own drives, but relieves his feeling of inferiority, palliates his moral failures, and enrolls him as the protector of home and civilization.

## V

To trace the history and significance of this view of women would reveal to us the entire background from which modern feminism has risen. For the stereotypes of sex difference are no mere idle fantasies of male thinking; they are working habits, attitudes which have become organized and function in our entire political, economic, and social system. They have become reinforced through the inertia with which we accept our legal tradition. Statutes and court practices still preserve the philosophy that a woman's personality should be submerged in that of the man whose name she takes in marriage. The legal disabilities of married women in such fields as private contract remain in certain states, where they have given rise to a quaint confession of judicial helplessness in the phrase, "the dangers of a married woman's papers." There are states in which the husband may still claim a wholly unmerited interest in his wife's earnings or in

the property she inherits. Legal history reveals an amazing series of fictions which have been created to legalize the protection of a married woman's estate without facing the issue squarely and granting her full rights of ownership identical with those of a man. Our legal and political traditions thus embody the notion that women are lacking in the qualities necessary for full citizenship, and require, in economic and domestic affairs, the supervision of the male sex.

The stereotypes regarding the emotional and moral nature of women have helped in shaping their civic status. Against these odds the fight for universal suffrage has, in many civilized countries, been won; but there are still many barriers to be overcome before women may aspire on equal terms with men to the higher political offices. With regard to the right to serve on juries numerous objections have been raised, the most potent, perhaps, being the notion that women are governed by their emotions and sympathies rather than by reason. But the assumption of their greater moral sensitivity has also played a part. The view has been advanced in all seriousness that, in some jury trials, "evidence so revolting is given that women should not listen to it." (!) In keeping with this attitude, certain sex crimes have been described in such a way as to make the woman's fall from virtue appear more heinous than the man's. In a large proportion of our states prostitution is still legally defined as an act of a female; and in many cases the women are punished while the men go free.

In institutional religion the position of women presents a paradox. Notwithstanding their manifest interest in church activities, and their importance as functionaries in many of the earlier religions, women in our civilization are practically unrepresented in the official hierarchy of religious denominations. One explanation for this state of affairs is that men are considered to have more spiritual power and ability for leadership than women, combined with that emotional steadiness necessary for the guardianship of religious institutions. There is, however, another hypothesis. The Christian faith, and perhaps most modern religions, have in them a trace of asceticism. The lusts of the flesh must be subordinated to the more spiritual impulses of the race. Is it,

then, too far-fetched to surmise that, precisely because it is difficult for men to regard women apart from the background of their sexuality, they have excluded them from conspicuous positions in the religious institutions which men control? Some will object to this explanation. It seems to me, however, quite plausible that the urge which has led men to connect the entire character of the women with their sexual function may have operated unconsciously to bar them from situations in which the sex interest must be forgotten.

But whatever the reason, it is clear that women are not at present generally welcomed in ecclesiastical offices. Excepting for a few instances, the only way in which a woman can become a leader in the religious field is to start a revival or a new religion of her own. We have in our churches few, if any, established female cardinals or bishops; but we have such pioneers as Mary Baker Eddy, Evangeline Booth, and Annie Besant.

Even within the intimacy of family life, traditional assumptions about the nature of women exact their wonted tribute. There are statutes fixing legal domicile by male choice, statutes giving to the father the chief custody of the children, statutes restricting women from entering certain vocations, and statutes preventing them from giving their time as freely as they choose to employment outside the family circle. It is astonishing that a man may not only misjudge women in public affairs, but may live for years with a wife about whom, merely because she is a woman, he entertains the most profound illusions. Mr. J. M. Barrie's little play, "The Twelve-Pound Look," depicts the former wife of a successful and self-satisfied Englishman who has recently been honored by knighthood. Having tired of conventionally admiring and obeying her spouse, she has secretly saved the twelve pounds necessary for the purchase of a typewriter, having secured which she abandoned her husband for a career of her own. The astonishment and chagrin of the husband are increased when he learns, later, that her reason for leaving him was not her love for another man (the old illusion that women's motives are mainly sexual), but merely because she wanted to live her own life as she, not her husband, understood it.

It will be granted that many men are liberal enough with their wives, even though they may not understand them. If they cling to the old stereotypes, it is because they would be lost without them. But whether from self-interest or from sheer lethargy, the man-made character of woman still persists, condemning women in their homes, as it does in the activities of government, industry, and religion, to a suppression of their real talents and a distorted perspective of their life's values.

## VI

It may be possible by future legislation to alter the discriminating rules which hamper women in so many fields. Considerable progress has already been made toward this goal. But even if rights everywhere equal to those of men could be gained, a deeper problem would remain. In our complex world individual initiative and personality are only a partial basis of conduct. What we can accomplish is not wholly determined by our legal rights, nor by our own ambition, but, in addition to these, *by the rôle which others expect us to play*. The story is told of a cross-eyed woman who went to live in a strange community. The neighbors, unaccustomed to her type of visual defect, misinterpreted it as a suspicious way of looking at people. The rumor spread that the newcomer, who could not look anyone in the eye, was possessed of sinister motives. Ostracized by hostility, the unfortunate woman was obliged to live the life of a recluse. Her sensitive withdrawal was further interpreted as evidence of a misanthropic nature. After years of this treatment, she gradually came to accept the "social self" given her by the members of the community, and became a sour and suspicious person in fact. Whether it be reality or fiction, this story illustrates a well-established psychological truth. John's "self" is not wholly John, but consists also of what James thinks of John.

Applying this principle to attitudes concerning sex, we can understand the profound influence which stereotypes of sex-difference exert upon the development of the usual female personality. Reared from infancy in a world where she is regarded as a creature of tender impulse—maternal, homeseeking, unoriginal,

submissive, and endowed with a kind of natural chastity—what is left for a girl but to adopt this character and to play the part throughout life? Not through nature, but by early training, she becomes a reflection of a feminine image which men carry about in their heads. She has little incentive for disturbing this image. To live in accordance with it not only brings her the favor of the other sex, but soothes any troublesome questionings as to her nature and her ultimate destiny. Stereotypes, though they may be false as a picture of fact, are real enough as psychological attitudes. Men may fail to see women as they are: but women tend to become as men see them.

In fields where women have been given opportunities nominally equal to those of men, they are still controlled through the influence of their "social self." The fact that they are expected to reveal a personal and emotional type of judgment, fraught with sympathy and suggestibility, probably has its effect upon their behavior. In the few instances where women have attained high offices, popular stereotypes have stacked the cards against them. If a man in the office of governor gains undue power by playing politics, he is simply a corrupt politician. If a woman does the same thing, she is not only a corrupt politician, but a weakling, a ready prey to the influence of some evil man. When a woman in office misappropriates funds her conduct is unusually notorious: first, because female standards being higher than male, she has farther to fall; and second, because her disgrace, unlike that of the male defaulter, is taken as a reflection upon her entire sex. That which complicates the problem most of all is the fact that many women are inclined to accept these judgments themselves.

Against the record of women in business two types of criticism have been urged. It is said, first, that they are unsteady and emotional, and that they inject personal motives into their dealings. In other words, they fail to play the game as men play it. Second, it is said that they have not succeeded in raising business to the higher moral level which one would expect of their sex. They have failed, in other words, to devise business methods of their own. Both these objections are illogical. The first, because it assumes women's shortcomings in business to be an evidence of

inborn traits unfitting them for that type of work. The second, because it blames them for not exhibiting in business certain instincts which they are gratuitously thought to possess. As to the charge of emotionalism and the exaggerated personal element, the fact that women have been expected to behave in this fashion from their infancy is overlooked. When men for centuries have taken toward women an attitude of chivalry, yielding them every advantage and form of protection, is it logical to suppose that upon entering business they can at once lay aside the habit of expecting favors of men? To one taught from her childhood to believe that gentlemen will always treat a "lady" with consideration, a brusque masculine opposition in business must seem not merely a part of the game, but a personal insult. Subjected both within and outside the family circle to intensely personal treatment, women have learned to capitalize the personal attitude in their dealings.

In many fields women are still patterning their careers in accordance with unproved assumptions regarding their natures. Entering the wider avenues of experiences some of them, it is true, have begun to doubt. For the most part, however, they still accept the old stereotypes. Though keenly aware that something is wrong, and that gates are closed which might admit them to fields of genuine self-expression, they imagine this to be merely the result of unequal laws and outworn traditions. The full explanation they do not see; for it lies imbedded in their own habits. Instead of following freely the potentialities with which they were born, they live out a stereotyped image of what they are supposed to be. Unwittingly they play parts which were written not by themselves, but by others.

It is futile, therefore, to talk of attaining full recognition for women by legal and economic reform alone. The shifting of our institutional practices, though important, will touch only the surface of the problem. Political and vocational equality may be acquired; but women will never be soundly established until they attain a *psychological* equality with men. And there is no way in which this can be done except by education. I do not mean education in the sense of schools and universities; for these are often or-



ganized upon the very assumptions we are attacking. By education I mean a critical and self-searching insight on the part of parents and teachers, a determination that the old notions of sex difference shall no longer be implanted in the minds of boys and girls. Through such education we must not only open to women full opportunities for practical and creative professions; but we must refrain from prejudging the comparative fitness of the sexes to enter them. To teachers and parents falls the responsibility of forestalling all preconceptions about the nature of women and all unfounded assumptions of how their behavior differs from that of men. Only in this way can a growing girl really discover herself and attain in her inner life, as well as her career, the truest fulfillment of her nature.

## VII

But the end of our quest is not yet reached. In proportion as we banish social inequalities and eradicate the old habits of thinking, a final problem will emerge. For while the sophistries underlying our present sex-stereotypes are being exposed, there must arise the question of what is to take their place. If the old notions gave women a false place in civilization, they at least assigned them *some* position; and it may be better to have a warped social image as the pattern for one's personality than to have no pattern at all. Suppose that all the neighbors of the cross-eyed lady were, after many years, suddenly to drop their suspicion and regard her as a total stranger with no distinguishing characteristics whatever. Her lot, at first, might be even more trying than before. Her entire social personality having vanished, she would neither know how to act towards others nor how to regard herself. If life is to become tolerable, she must face the problem of building up, without guide or model, a new social self and a new rôle in the community.

Such, then, is the issue which will confront the emancipated women of the future. The old social image of the sex being destroyed, new personalities for individual women must be established in its place. If women are not as men have always regarded them, and as they have regarded themselves, what, then, *are* they? What new and more genuine awareness can be built up?

What patterns can be followed in selecting their individual careers and in developing their characters? Will the women of the new era be able to solve this problem? I, for one, am convinced that they will. The only requirement is that, in trying to solve it, they shall be let alone. Do women have inborn qualities which distinguish them, in their potentialities, from men? Time alone, and the freedom of women to investigate, can tell. We must not prejudice the question. We must not legislate in advance; for by so doing we close all access to the test of experience by which alone the question can be answered. Shall we not, therefore, clear our minds of the seductive stereotypes of sex-difference? Shall we not wipe the slate clean? If there *are* innate characteristics which separate women from men, women will in time reveal them, and will themselves propose methods by which to provide for them. If inborn sex-differences do *not* exist, that too will be disclosed. Sex, in that event, will confer no privilege and impose no limitation. Under such a condition women, untrammelled by superstitions about their inherited nature, will be able not only to banish the old stereotypes forever, but to replace them with a new and truer conception. And in such a revision of our manner of regarding women, a revision in which the preconceptions of certain traits characterizing the entire sex are laid aside, women will be able, as *individuals*, to develop the capacities and traits which are truly theirs, and to achieve an expression of themselves as unique and integrated personalities.

What, then, is the key to that mystery which has vexed the philosophers of all ages? How can the riddle of 'woman's nature' be answered? The reply is simple: *let the women answer it themselves*. Given time and freedom from biased assumptions, they will discover themselves, and will so remake their surroundings that their lives, no longer lived at cross purposes, will express the natures that are really theirs. The process will be slow, and the method at first may be one of trial and error. Age-old superstitions cannot be dispelled in a day; nor the mistakes of centuries set right entirely by the passage of laws. But in the end women will gain a vision of their true destinies, and will go forward to meet them, the partners, rather than the moral bond-servants, of men.



**EDUCATIONAL**



---

---

## XIX

### IMMEDIACY VERSUS INSTITUTIONALISM IN EDUCATION

---

---

IN ALMOST ANY treatise which one may read upon modern social problems, or in any discussion upon which one may launch, one can feel fairly certain that, somewhere in the argument, there will be invoked the ultimate and indispensable solution of education. No matter what new programs of adjustment may be proposed, no matter how carefully new policies and new leaders may be selected, there is presupposed in every reform a systematic raising of the intelligence of the masses who are to participate. In spite of differences of political party, religious faith, or economic philosophy, education is the one great panacea upon which all social leaders and reformers agree.

Unfortunately, however, the connecting of education with social change usually stops with the agreement as to its necessity. In reality this realization is only the beginning. For when we pass from education as a slogan to specific educational agencies, a number of difficult problems confront us. Education as a basis for social melioration may be understood in at least two different senses. First, it may mean the teaching of some special formula or technique which men propose to inaugurate. It might consist, for example, of knowledge disseminated concerning the process of birth control and its present need in society; or it might embody the platform of a new political party. When this is our meaning we shall at once find that the education taught in our schools is quite unrelated to the task. Educators regard their function as one of transmitting knowledge of a general, informative, and useful sort, not as one of partisanship or of special pleading. Teachers not only are unready to assume the rôle of social leaders or reformers; they are not permitted to do so. Schools, for the most part, are institutional habits set up, controlled, and directed in close touch with the activities of the officials of 'government,' 'industry,' and 'organized religion.' They

are 'geared in' with the other institutional habits both of leaders and followers. The knowledge or training which is provided through them is therefore not allowed to become too critical or too subversive of the present order.

The other view of education is that which has for its ideal not the propaganda or training for some particular innovation, but a general broadening of viewpoint, an emancipation and liberalizing of the masses. If we can produce a higher type of intelligence, character, and citizenship in people generally, we shall find, according to this view, that the remedial policies shaped by wise leaders will receive immediate and effective popular support. But from this standpoint also, the value of our present education has been seriously over-rated. For the theory of salvation through general culture requires an integrity of life and a set of values too deeply personal, too closely bound up with the trial and error of one's own experience, to be achieved through formalized instruction within the classroom. Procedure in our schools and colleges, for the most part, is restricted to the teaching of the common branches, the attainment of special skills, or the mastering of the trades and professions. It is rare that we find emerging a philosophy of life sufficiently broad, altruistic, and informed to lend spontaneous and effective support to the farsighted idealism of a leader. Such an appeal to education is one which pictures our educational institutions in a somewhat mythical, perfectionist sense. It is admitted, say the reformers, that systems of voting, methods of representation, new forms of city government, and all the rest are useful only as instruments for those who have the public welfare truly at heart. In order to adapt them and make them truly useful we must have a superior type of men and women as citizens. Yet in order to produce this superior type, the reformers rely upon another set of agencies which also are merely instruments furnishing the technique, but not necessarily the motive, for the good life. This appeal to our institutional education as a determiner of character for changing other aspects of society is based upon the doubtful assumption that we can cure one institution merely by developing another.

Whatever responsibility social reformers may place upon our

educational system for advancing their program, the educators themselves are, as a rule, little concerned about such an obligation. Teachers go on instructing new generations in the social order as it is, not as it should be. Practically the entire curriculum and method of our public schools, our business colleges, and our technical schools, are based upon the assumption of a smoothly functioning society in which the individual must secure his livelihood by learning to perform some recognized and useful part. Growing up in this atmosphere of uncritical acceptance, a student by the time he has reached college is likely to have succumbed to the fiction that his institutions are the guardians, rather than the instrumentalities, of human life, and that his professors are the dispensers of a knowledge which, since it forms the very content of our cultural heritage, is never to be questioned. Having delegated his responsibility for needed social changes to his country's 'institutions,' he naturally feels that these all-important agencies must be kept, at all costs, intact. A vicious circle is thus created. We can never arrive, through education, at a level of popular zeal and understanding necessary for creative social adjustment until that education ceases to be merely a phase of institutional behavior, and becomes a process *superior* to the institutional habits of the time.

## II

In order that we may formulate some principle by which this goal can be reached, let us reëxamine two theories of education which are now widely current and respectable. The first theory is that the purpose of education is to transmit the accumulated knowledge and culture of the race. The objection to this theory, in my opinion, is that it places too much emphasis upon culture and knowledge in the abstract. It rests upon the assumption that the inculcation of the social inheritance is more important as a control of an individual's life than are attitudes, traits, and habits which he may work out for himself. Society, though accumulative, is in this view to be regarded from the individual's standpoint as practically unalterable; and the function of education is to adapt each individual, from birth onward, to a life in society. Because we



are biased by the life around us, because, as the anthropologists say, "we cannot see over our own cultural noses," we cannot envisage any other manner in which an individual, developing freely and in his own right, might prefer to live. When we set the stage for the uniformities characteristic of our culture pattern, and train individuals accordingly, we obscure those differences of style, preference, and personal touch through which we might otherwise have envisaged an entirely different picture of the individual concerned and predicted for him a unique course of development. It is sheer presumption to assume that upon the *tabula rasa* which constitutes the new-born child this one cherished picture, the one to which we are limited by the bias of our early training, is the only picture that can be inscribed.

A second theory widely accepted, though in my opinion equally questionable, is that education is primarily a training for life. The trouble with this view is, in part, a practical one; namely, the difficulty of determining what life is. We are given no clearly defined objective by which to appraise our methods; for life is as diverse as the men and women who live it. Moreover it is continually changing, often unpredictable, and above all, capable of being individualized. We may correctly estimate a single trait or capacity of an individual here and there; but we are powerless to predict intelligently or to guide the entire changing pattern of an individual's personality. Neglecting, therefore, the individual phase, the only thing which we can do is to see that the youth is trained in certain general attitudes, sentiments, and skills which will be likely to be useful in our present social order. We can teach the three R's, the social amenities, the *mores*, and the habits comprising our institutions. These, however, are not the whole life; they are only those aspects of life common to people who have been reared within a given society. Training in these habits is training in the form of living, rather than in living itself. Life for each individual is a succession of unique interests, values, and enthusiasms which includes always an element of adventure and future discovery. An individual, therefore, as a being of unrealized potentialities, does not even know himself. How much less, then, can he be known by the directors of a formal educational process? A personal *Weltanschauung* cannot be

taught; it must be built up by an individual in the process of living. Through our institutional system of education we train individuals in certain things which may be found useful in later life; but this is not truly a preparation for life in the broadest sense.

### III

In the place of these two generally accepted theories of education I would propose a different and, in some respects, a contradictory view. We may regard education not primarily as a transmission of the cultural heritage (though this aim is not precluded), but as a process of helping individuals to find and to express themselves. It is a method of revealing and liberating their potentialities for various forms of experience. And in this process the question of whether these forms of experience have been known or utilized in society prior to the life of the individual is largely irrelevant. We may also think of education as the manner of one's present living, here and now. The values and purposes involved in what is learned would not, in this view, be deferred for a later realization; they would be experienced by the learner while the learning is taking place. We may call this the theory of *immediacy* in education. I am not, of course, advancing it as a new or original theory: it has been proposed by many others. My purpose is merely to render its grounds somewhat more explicit, and to show that it possesses certain merits which have not been sufficiently stressed or realized in our traditional procedures. *Immediacy may be defined as the full, penetrating, direct, and purposeful experience of whole individuals realized in the educational process while it is going on.*

What we have just said refers to the conditions under which the educational experience must function in order to be immediate. But the question naturally arises: What is to be the content of this experience? An answer to this question would require an inventory of all the psychological and biological tendencies of human beings, both generic and individual in character. To mention only a few of the more obvious, we may refer to bodily exercise, seeking security from danger and intrusion, eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty, sleeping when exhausted, satisfying a craving for affection, and making love, as the im-

pulse is felt, both in its preparatory embellishments and in the consummation of the specific sexual desire. There must be included also the universal tendency to manipulate objects and to satisfy our curiosity concerning the world about us and the processes of our own bodies. There are also the important activities which are developed in subservience to the aesthetic interest. These latter comprise forms of experimentation in the production and enjoyment of impressions which we regard as beautiful. Next, we must provide an opportunity for the testing of the standards and customs involved in living successfully with others; and with these social values should be included the forms of experiences which we designate as 'right' or 'good.' And finally, there must be recognized the need for the expression of the emotions which are aroused by aspects of life and nature which we cannot understand. I refer to that inveterate feeling of mystery which has prompted men in all ages to create religions and systems of philosophy. Immediacy in education is not primarily preparation for future living, but the process of satisfying all these natural human urges, needs, and propensities, here and now, through the medium of the learning process. It is the function of providing a ground for their operation, of bringing them into play in all the problems by which the student is faced, so that he may be spurred to react through them upon his environment in a whole-hearted and purposeful manner.

The content of all these urges and forms of experience is to be taken as an end in itself; for it is the very content of life. These urges themselves are not to be considered as incentives in the learning process or as means of stimulating individuals to acquire a vocation or to appreciate the products of our advanced civilization. Cultural objects, for example, should minister to a child's love of beauty; his love of beauty should not be developed for the sake of the masterpieces of our culture. Sublime as these creations may be, they are incidental only; and they should be held in abeyance, rather than stressed, if they are to contribute toward our aim of immediacy in the teaching process. It is more important that an individual develop his own capacities for a compelling scientific interest in nature than that he master the world's whole storehouse of scientific fact and theory. It is

more vital for him to see beauty in nature for himself, to get the 'feel' of manipulating his own environment so as to produce something lovely, than that he should view the world's masterpieces or hear the most glorious of symphonies. It is more fundamental that he should experience his own trial and error in the quest for happiness in social living, than that he should follow slavishly the institutional pattern which has been traditionally molded for him by others.

Let us see whether we can define a little more clearly what is meant by immediacy in the theory of education. Upon close inspection of experiences which may be said to be immediate, we usually find that three conditions are fulfilled. *First*, there is a direct, intimate, and penetrating contact between the individual and that part of his environment to which he is attending. There is a direct facing of the object studied, with a point-for-point response to the manifold stimulations which it affords. One can deal with the object in parts as well as in its entirety, and in motion as well as at rest. In such a contact there is, *secondly*, a direct functioning of the individual's felt purposes and interests at all points. The experience is not merely a means to an end; it is in itself vital and absorbing. *Third*, there may enter into the contact any one of the many traits, capacities, sentiments, desires, or preferences which make up the individual's personality. The appeal of the object studied is not only significant, purposeful, and operative through interaction with the student at many points; it is also so richly varied that through it almost every tendency of the individual's nature is afforded potential expression. This last condition means that, instead of evoking only certain common and uniform reactions, as in our institutionalized teaching, we seek to give play to the various interests, talents, and characteristics latent within the particular student. The self-expression of an individual, rather than his perfection according to any outside standard, is to be our aim.

#### IV

One of the most urgent problems which reformers are laying at our educators' doors is that of training for the use of leisure time. The extremists in the program of a universal leisure to be

secured through industrial technology seem to be working toward a life almost completely divorced from work. Men's future leisure pursuits, according to their view, will consist only of activities which are biologically unnecessary, and which will have little relevance to the task of adjusting men to nature. It is doubtful if such a life will be practicable, or whether, if it can be attained, it will not make us more wretched instead of happier. In contrast with this technological view of leisure the exponent of immediacy advocates a different conception, which he calls the theory of 'biological leisure.' Such leisure lies not in eliminating work but in making it less arduous, less unpleasant, and less dangerous. It brings out the values which lie in a process of continuous and successful, through effortful, adjustment. It is for a leisure of this more modest biological sort, rendering the tasks we still have to perform more fully expressive of our natures, that our educators must prepare us. In our struggle to retain this purposeful relationship to nature, and to preserve the values of a life from which effort is in danger of being eliminated, the philosophy of immediacy may serve both as our inspiration and our guide.

As we face our boasted leisure of the future one of our greatest concerns is whether, in an age of effortless mechanical adjustment, the things about us can retain their previous significance and interest. In gaining dominion over the world shall we not lose the significant meaning of the world itself? Will not our attention to natural things be replaced by a preoccupation with the tools through which we conquer things? And will these tools afford that satisfying sense of reality which accompanied our previous contacts with nature? Enthusiasts for technological invention have overlooked, it seems to me, a psychological factor of the first importance,—namely, that we value objects not so much for the uses to which they can be put, not so much for those other objectives which, as tools, they help us to attain, as for the experience of adjusting our bodies and our capacities to their use. A cabinet maker or a metal worker is happy in his shop not only because he produces good furniture or good wares, but because while he is doing so he is able to come into direct

contact at all points with his materials and his tools. In guiding a chisel or a hammer he is responding with nerve and muscle in a continuous and ever changing fashion to unnumbered details of the wood and to every angle of the metal's surface. His strokes produce detailed, inner changes in his materials; and these changes, in turn, stimulate and guide him in his succeeding strokes. The encounter of the cutting edge with the wood is his own encounter. For this reason he values, and even comes to love, the tools and materials with which he works.

The experience of such an artisan is very different from that of a worker in a modern hardware or furniture factory, where the mass production of parts through machinery is the accepted method. In the latter instance only processes of assembling and finishing are, as a rule, done by hand. Beyond learning to manipulate a few levers with a stereotyped motion and to feed the materials to the machine, there is little that a workman, as a personality in contact with his materials, is permitted to do. He does not react continuously to every nuance of the process; he merely starts the machines, feeds them, and stops them. In some instances he may guide the process a little by hand, as in running a board through a planing mill; but the intimate responses of his own body to the material as it is being fashioned have been, for the most part, eliminated. With increasing perfection labor-saving machinery is coming to convey each piece through its proper channels with greater mechanical accuracy and with continually less necessity of human intervention. In some industries machinery for assembling as well as producing the parts is being developed. It is gratuitous to expect that, under these conditions, modern factory workers can place the same value upon their raw materials and their tools as did the manual craftsmen of an earlier day. I have never heard of a worker growing to love his machine. The handicraft tools were good for two purposes: they produced a useful and well made product (though to be sure in smaller quantities than the machines); and they also gave the workman who handled them an experience of his own purpose, his own artistic leanings, and his own abilities. They contributed, therefore, to making work valuable and interesting. Machinery, as a

tool independent of the human body, is good for only one purpose,—namely, that of getting a large quantity of a certain product made as quickly and with as little effort as possible.

I find my automobile convenient, in fact necessary, for keeping up with the tempo of the other modern machines and the accelerated habits of modern living; but I do not otherwise value it. I certainly feel no affection for it. I am not moved to paint its picture, nor to write a poem about it. An old carriage, on the other hand, a plow, a harrow, or a horse looking out of a stable window are things which can be valued and even cherished in themselves. They have been the subjects of art, of poetry, and of song. A modern tractor and threshing machine fill me with an awe which is perhaps akin to an aesthetic feeling. It is, however, an experience far less intimate than that evoked by a plow. The tractor is enormously useful for an ulterior end. It plows a huge field in record time; it may make me wealthy. But it is not valued as a part of me or my world. Its operation is stereotyped, and is subject to my control only in its grosser aspects; there is no subtle interaction between it and myself. It is a tool which one can only do something *with*. The man who guides a horse-drawn plow, however, can do something *to* as well as something *with* his materials. They respond continuously to slight changes of control by voice or hand; and the movements by which they are controlled are not stereotyped, like the turning of a wheel or the pressing of a throttle, but are endlessly varied. An automobile, while it can be delicately controlled, offers a much more restricted field of stimulus and response than does a horse. It can, of course, be started, stopped, propelled at different speeds, steered, reversed, and turned. With a horse one can do all these things (though, of course, not as rapidly); but with a horse one can also do a hundred other things which, though intimately related to the journey, are impossible with an automobile. The only way in which I could come to value my automobile for itself would be to learn to take it apart, to travel with it in gypsy fashion for a long time, making all repairs myself and using my ingenuity and labor upon it, until I had come to know its caprices and to react to it as intimately as I would to my horse or dog.

Objects of a technological civilization, which we can only do something *with* and not *to*, when their usefulness is over become so much dross. No matter how efficient, intricate, or costly they may have been, when they cease to function for the end designed, they become depressing and hideous. On the other hand, our more biological implements, a worn out spade or axe, an old shawl, a spinning-wheel, or a flail become valued treasures. For they bespeak the years of intimacy between some individual and the world to which he fashioned his existence. Even where the experience of their use is purely vicarious and traditional, these objects weave, as heirlooms, the spell of that which has entered into human lives in an immediate and purposeful way. Compare the worn out wagon in the farmyard with those vast sepulchres of our motor age which may be seen in automobile dumps on the outskirts of any city; or contrast the fading glory of an ancient, wooden sailing vessel with the grim spectres of discarded battle-ships rusting in some out of the way corner of a harbor. The reference of such objects, no matter how efficient and shining they may once have been, was always to some purpose outside themselves; the value which lies in an immediate purpose and relation to human living was never theirs. They become, therefore, in their abandonment an unmitigated blemish upon the earth.

The moral of all this for the teacher is reasonably clear. To fill our world with elaborate technological devices and to center our education about their fabrication, improvement, and exploitation, is to train our youths for life in a world of psychologically and biologically inferior things. The philosophy of immediacy leads us in the opposite direction: it subordinates the use of implements to the preservation of a direct contact with untouched natural objects, and fosters the simple tools through which an individual can function as an acting, thinking and feeling organism. In the use of such implements and methods, as contrasted with the objects of a technological world, the three phases of immediacy are clearly illustrated. First, there is a continuous, point-for-point interaction between the worker and the things with which he is working. The individual touches his world at every stage of the process. Second, there is, at every point, an immediate realization of the individual's pur-



pose. He does not start a machine and then delegate to it, as it were, his own will; he remains at all times a conscious and purposeful agent. He is as truly interested in the means as he is in the ends. Third, there is an opportunity for the individual to interact with the things about him as a unique personality and to adjust himself as a whole individual to his material and social environment. A method of education that preserves for us these three fundamental values is the only training which can make us truly at home in the universe in which we live. It is the only means by which we can retain, in an age of leisure, our sense of organic reality and our kinship with the natural world.

## V

The same appraisal holds for the social as for the material aspects of education. A piece of machinery has, as we have seen, little worth—in fact it has scarcely any intelligible significance—except as an implement with which to do or to make something else. It is not valued for itself. Similarly those institutional procedures, capital, credit, incorporated financing, division of labor, and governmental regulation, which have made possible our complex machine civilization, are themselves things of no intrinsic value. They too are useful only for ulterior ends. If, therefore, the social world into which the youth is inducted, is one in which he sees persons only in their institutional relationships, it will be a world devoid of educational value so far as immediacy is concerned. There can be no direct interaction with anything so abstract as an economic system; we do not experience the interests and purposes of individuals through the alleged purposes of their institutions; and the institutional activities themselves, being segmentalized and standardized, can never express the integrated and potentially infinite variations within a single personality. The only way in which we can achieve immediacy in the teaching of human relations is to bring the individual into interaction with his fellows in an informal, face to face manner. We must ignore the institutional formulas and watch the interplay of individual personalities which such formulas often conceal.

I know a certain professor of politics who puts more faith in

the actual contacts of his students with politicians, ward bosses, and party workers than in volumes of governmental structure and orthodox political science. He is not so much interested in teaching about the political institutions through which officials operate as he is in securing opportunities for his students to watch these operations themselves as they are revealed in intimate human relationships. Teachers of this sort, in my experience, are lamentably rare. Courses in history are often concerned with spectacular battles and their outcome, or with the rise, development, and decline of certain institutions. There is a deplorable neglect of the study of personalities, and of the intimate phases in the adjustment of common men to their past and present environments. Teachers have often dealt with the constitution as a document of rights and powers, when they might have exhibited it as a method of reciprocation between individuals animated by differing, and sometimes by opposed, interests. Economic instruction consists essentially of the description of the resources, processes, and organized functions of capitalists, workers, and consumers. There are too few excursions to places where students can see these actual processes going on. Even when visits to banks or industrial plants are made, the emphasis is usually upon the product and upon the system by which production is facilitated and controlled, rather than upon the specific behavior of the worker, the administrator, or the manager. The teaching of geography, so far as the human factor is concerned, is largely restricted to the discussion of the products of economic institutional behavior. A child is given a picture of different habitats, but not of individuals reacting and living in them. He is told in detail—often to the point of boredom—what kinds of industries flourish in the Connecticut valley, the cotton belt, or the great Northwest; but he is not told much about what kind of individuals live there, nor, in an intimate fashion, how they live in these particular environments. In college courses we have much to say about the history and the rôle of the family institution, about problems of housing, and the decline of the family. But few students go into actual homes where the relationships of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, can be immediately studied.

We talk about the causes of crime and the predatory activities of gangs; but few of us indeed have talked intimately with criminals or experienced directly the acts of gangsters. In the social field, therefore, as in the world of non-human objects, we have much need of the educational principle of immediacy. We can discover realities and teach them to students only by face to face, penetrating, and purposeful contact between ourselves and the individuals we are to observe. When educators can provide opportunities for such an experience our youths will become equipped for effective participation, rather than for biased and wishful speculation, in their social studies.

## VI

If there is one incontrovertible requirement for the wholesome employment of leisure time, it is that we must foster in our leisure hours those pursuits whose reward lies in doing them rather than in their distant consequences. Leisure interests are those whose fulfillment is not at some future time, but here and now. We need, therefore, some criterion by which to assure ourselves that this important condition of immediacy is being fulfilled. Such a test must be based upon an extended observation of an individual's behavior and upon his own disclosure of his personal values. Let us take, for example, two men who are riding on a train. To one of them, as we might discover by observation, traveling is an end in itself. This man is riding merely because he enjoys going from place to place, viewing the scenery, and talking to companions upon the way. These motives alone are sufficient to make his action intelligible and to explain it both to himself and to others. The entire value which his journey has for him, so far as we are aware, can be summed up in the experience itself. Now the pleasure which the fulfillment of such a purpose can give is continuous. It is being realized not at some distant time or destination, but moment by moment throughout the trip itself. The events and scenes of the journey have for the traveler a feeling of 'worth-whileness' which is all their own. Then too, the individual in question knows whether his purpose is really being fulfilled, whether or not he is having an enjoyable time, as the time is passing. The

ultimate purpose being also the present one, he can reflect upon the means he is using to accomplish it and can more accurately gauge the value of those means. He can change his seat or his route, talk to one companion instead of another, and make other changes which are needed in order to get the most enjoyment out of his experience. And finally, he satisfies through his travel not one particular desire, but a large number. He is not merely going somewhere; he is doing and seeing many things of interest en route. He is not merely a passenger, but a personality.

Our other imaginary traveler presents a different picture. His motive for riding on the train, let us suppose, is to reach a distant city where he is planning to sell a contractor the elevators for a new building, or to execute a merger of his company with another. In such a case, the purpose for which the traveling is done is entirely separated from the time, place, and experience of the action itself. It is, therefore, not consciously present and active at all times during the journey; nor are the details of the trip adjusted to it in any intimate way. The trip has nothing whatever to do with the purpose for which it is taken beyond the provision of transportation. No particular significance is attached to the scenery through which the traveler passes nor to the companions with whom he rides. It is obvious that a journey under such circumstances gives little play to the variety of traits and interests which make up this personality and which comprise his potential capacity for participation and enjoyment. He is not reacting to an environment, but is simply being carried about. He is not, if judged at the moment, a unique personality, but merely a passenger. It is as though his entire life were poured for the present through the single segment of his behavior involved in his buying a ticket and sitting upon a seat. This segment of his life is like a cog which gears in with his other segments which are involved in the entire business situation. Life for him is a succession of rôles which he plays, not for the experience of the parts themselves, but only because each one is a means toward the one which follows. There is no such thing as being consistently himself, that is, his whole self, from moment to moment in every situation.

The relation of motive to action in such a situation, furthermore, is distant rather than proximate; the purpose never lies in the act itself but always in the future. For when the individual in question comes to the new rôle for the sake of which the first step was performed, that rôle at once loses its significance as an end and becomes, in turn, merely instrumental to the next. When our traveling business man reaches his destination and enters into the conference, although he may find a certain zest in the affair, he will be likely to feel that it is really not his primary purpose after all. The more basic purpose may be to secure a rise in his sales record or an increased capitalization of his company with an ensuing rise in the value of its stock, or again to increase his company's business, thus enhancing the profits for himself and his associates. The object to be achieved, therefore, is again pushed forward into the future; again it becomes distant rather than proximate. But even this second group of objectives when they are attained are not final; the augmented sales, capitalization, and rewards are not ends after all, but only means. They serve the still more distant purpose of increased power and prestige, of a higher standard of living for the promoter and his family. Or perhaps they may become the means of increasing still further the capital and the expansion of his business, in which case the deferring of realized purpose leads itself around in a never ending circle, always striving, but never reaching fulfillment. The enjoyment of the rewards of action, in the case of our second traveler, is therefore continually detached and in another sphere from the activity of the moment. It is always just ahead; and, if experienced at all, its realization is always separated from the vocational activity through which it is provided. In his daily life, as a result, he is seldom permitted the full zest of living; he works continually toward the goal of a satisfaction which he never fully attains. Furthermore, since his means and his final ends lie in two different worlds, he can never be fully certain that the former are really adequate instruments for the latter; he may be deceiving himself by enacting, through habit, a succession of stereotyped rôles which in the end will lead him nowhere and will defeat the enjoyment of life as a whole. In looking always

ahead he loses the view of the entire plan. He fails to see that a true temporal perspective must always include the present, for it is in the present that we are compelled always to live.

There is, moreover, in such a career no intimacy with the details of the persons and objects encountered; there are only institutional, stereotyped performances. Since the ultimate purpose in which whole personalities can be expressed retreats always from view, such an individual must be content with an existence in which he employs only one segment of his capacities and interests. He must for the moment be a salesman and nothing else. Life becomes compartmentalized; business, as we say, is business. There is always restless traveling about without ever arriving, always something to do in order to achieve something else. Life is a career only of means and never of experienced ends. One is like a lonely eagle flying from crag to crag, perching only long enough to orientate one's self for another flight.

The preceding example, to be sure, is stated in extreme form. No one would deny that business, or any other standardized vocation, may at times offer satisfactions peculiar to itself for persons of particular qualifications and interests. It should be noted, however, that these proximate values in the work he is doing are often unlikely to be the determining motives of a business man, because, in the sphere of economic competition, the chances are weighted heavily against immediacy of purpose. One who does not like business, but engages in it merely for gain (that is for distant purposes) may sometimes, through propitious circumstances, become financially successful, and so, in spite of dislike may continue in business as a vocation. On the other hand, no matter how thoroughly an individual may enjoy the immediate zest of transactions, he cannot continue long in this field if he does not produce larger figures upon the credit than upon the debit side of the ledger.

## VII

In the field of education this issue of proximate versus distant satisfactions becomes immediately pertinent. It applies not only in the sphere of business, but in any activity where considerations of efficiency are likely to arise. Most educators will doubt-

less say that they are striving to realize both of these objectives, the immediate as well as the more remote. Yet if a choice had to be made between them—and such a choice is frequently necessary in education—it would probably be the more distant, rather than the immediate purpose which would be preferred. We are forced into this position by the necessity of securing for the individual a livelihood in a complex social order where each must play a prescribed part. In stressing the fulfillment of students' *immediate* interests I am by no means discounting the traditional use of education as a preparation for future living. It would be folly to sacrifice an individual's life-long adjustment or to subject him to unreasonable hazards by any policy of present satisfactions. Nevertheless, admitting the future (which is after all a vague consideration) into our program, can we not deal with it more effectively by integrating it with the more definite present? If I seem to favor the short rather than the longer view, it is in order that we may gain a better perspective of the longer road itself. In planning the curriculum for the future adjustment of students, it will therefore be well to ask how far in the future such an objective lies, and whether when this point is reached, the purpose of the curriculum will then become fully realized rather than pushed forward to a still more distant fulfillment. Let us think of the future, in other words, not as something invariably 'just ahead,' but as a sequence of 'presents' like the one in which we live, a succession of experiences in which we are certain to find ourselves at succeeding moments of our development. Will the activity in these coming experiences become an interest in itself, or only a means to another goal?

In this practical age there is a tendency of students in the liberal arts colleges to chafe under four years of studies which, however interesting at the moment, hold little promise for their subsequent vocational advancement. Many are therefore using elective privileges to enroll in special vocational courses outside the beaten path of the traditional liberal curriculum. Directors of vocational schools themselves are, by the nature and requirements of their calling, obliged to place the emphasis rather heavily upon the side of the distant purpose. With the crowding

and specialization of the program of vocational students there has come a trend toward cutting down the number of elective liberal arts courses permitted. And where such courses cannot be omitted, there has arisen a tendency to request their instructors to give them a practical slant in the direction of the vocation for which the student is preparing. I know of a dean of a college of home economics who has been trying to persuade the head of the chemistry department to offer, as a means of enabling her students to satisfy their requirement, an introductory course so modified as to lay chief stress upon the applications of chemistry to home economics. Similar requests have been made of the heads of departments of psychology by vocational school administrations; and there are indications that we shall go much further in this direction.

What will be the outcome of this organized encroachment upon the interests of our traditional liberal studies? In robbing a student of the value of immediacy in his curricular pursuits, are directors of vocational schools preparing him for the later fulfillment of purposes which will then be immediate, or for a life in which he will be animated by purposes which lie always just ahead? Let us consider, for instance, the course in pure chemistry which is to be translated into the chemistry of home economics. When the time comes for a student to use her knowledge of chemistry will her activity of using it afford, in itself, an immediate and sufficient satisfaction; or will it be valued only as a means to still remoter ends such, for example, as the management of an orderly, economic, and hygienic household? And when we examine these further objectives do they, in turn, prove to be the satisfaction of immediate interest, or of an interest whose real value lies still further ahead? Why should one wish to manage a house in an orderly, economic, and scientific manner? This desire, it is true, may sometimes be based upon an immediate interest in home management itself. But on the other hand, it may be justified principally as a means toward a further objective, namely, the rearing of healthy, domesticated, and well-mannered children. And so we arrive at an ultimate purpose, that of family welfare, beyond which it is unnecessary to go. But when pursued



as a final goal rather than an interest ever present and compelling in itself, is not this ultimate objective somewhat intangible? It represents a quality, or state of being, of the members of one's family, rather than something which they are doing. Desirable as sound bodies, civil conduct, and poise may be, is there not also the further problem of what the children shall be doing with their bodies? It is all very well to make husbands and children domesticated and to give them a feeling of being at home; but what are the activities through which their home life is to be carried on? Good manners are valuable; but what are the children to be well-mannered about?

The rôle of the home manager who keeps up a high standard of household efficiency is like that of the business man who maintains a large income for his family. Such persons provide the form, the tools, the conveniences, the regulations, and the economic standards for family life; but they may offer little in the enrichment of its content. And is this not necessarily true of all preparatory activities which involve the segmentalizing, rather than the unifying, of the individual's interests, and which have their major purpose in future efficiency rather than in the activity itself? All such educational methods seem to me to minister to the form of human living, but to neglect the content. Regarded from this standpoint, the encroachment of vocational demands upon the liberal curriculum, and in fact, the specialization of our entire vocational era itself, take on a dubious aspect. It is a mistake to confuse efficient household management with the enjoyment of the activities in which the members of the household participate. The former may be a help toward the latter; but even as an aid it is never by itself, sufficient. A more extensive range of interests and sympathies is necessary. One may be an excellent home manager, yet not a very good companion in the home. Even to conserve valuable time in the curriculum, it may therefore be unwise for an administrator to sacrifice the students' introduction to 'pure' chemistry in favor of chemistry as applied to home-making. For in the former, while the student may miss some points in the chemistry of cooking, there will be revealed to her the rich experience of a new adventure. It will

also be possible for her to employ her training in the satisfaction of an immediate interest in her later career as homemaker. She can discuss scientific subjects with her husband if he is interested. She can present or demonstrate natural phenomena to her children; and she can encourage them to investigate nature for themselves. Chemistry can be adapted to the home in the most enriching sense only when the home is adapted in some degree to chemistry.

The issue may be summed up as the conflict between our choice of preparation for living and living itself. An educator who sacrifices the latter to the former really defeats his own function. Instead of placing emphasis upon higher education wholly as a student's training for life, we should do better, perhaps, to consider college merely as a place in which he can spend four years of that life in an interesting and purposeful manner. No one, to be sure, could object to preparedness on general principles; but if preparation is to be our chief, or our only, objective, we shall be in danger not only of thwarting our students' present cravings, but of losing sight of their later opportunities for experiencing the immediate satisfactions of living. We shall be committing the fallacy of the disciple of thrift who urges people to lay by their money for the opportunities of retirement, but who never teaches them how they shall spend their time or their money when the leisure of retirement comes. Have we not before us the common spectacle of a middle-aged man who has worked and hoarded zealously all his life, and who now sets out, devoid of all training for immediate participation, to read, to travel, to see life, and to achieve self-cultivation? Such a one is doomed to pathetic failure; for he has saved where he should have spent. What we need in education is not the sacrificing of the present for the future, but the tying of the two together by those strands of interest which afford a continuous and purposeful unfolding of our natures.

### VIII

We can now return with clearer understanding to the traditional ideal of education as a preparation for life. In the

present scheme of compartmentalized instruction, this objective, as we have shown, is exceedingly difficult to attain. But we have pointed, in the philosophy of immediacy, to a method which may help in this direction, in that it joins future and the present into a nexus of immediate purposes and satisfactions. Immediacy in education has, however, another advantage for the guidance of the student in the years which lie ahead. This gain lies not so much in vocational preparation or in knowledge as in that much discussed issue, the training of character. The difficulty with our present institutional methods as a means of character development is that they deal, for the most part, with the acquisition of attitudes, skills, and habits for use only in particular situations; whereas traits of character are to be conceived as attributes of the individual which play a part in all situations. A child must exhibit generosity, trustworthiness, and integrity in many and various relationships of life, or else these traits cannot be truly said to be a part of his personality. Now formal instruction, as in the subjects taught in public schools, can deal with only one field at a time or subjects in one department of instruction. The difficulty of transferring these traits or values from one field to another is the besetting obstacle of current ethical teaching. In a plan of education based upon immediacy this difficulty can be partly overcome; for this method prescribes that a student must come in contact with his teachers, his elders, and his associates outside as well as inside their institutional rôles. He must have an opportunity to know and to respond to them as complete individuals, not solely as teachers of arithmetic or spelling, or in the manner prescribed in a political, economic, or ecclesiastical pattern.

The significance of this possibility of transferring values is best seen in those normative approaches to life which we call the scientific, the aesthetic, the altruistic, and the religious. It is through a youth's attitude of immediacy toward his environment as there are evoked in him these normative experiences that a continuity of traits and values throughout his life can be developed. When we encourage him to respond freely and intimately toward his surroundings now as a scientist, now as a lover and creator

of beauty, and again as his brother's friend and helper, we can begin to trace, from one of those experiences to another, the glimmering threads of character which will ultimately unite them all in the expression of a consistent personality. Let us take, for example, the trait of altruism or fellow feeling in a concrete situation. Let us suppose that a student is face to face with a member of an alien, despised, and oppressed race. Now in order to experience toward that individual an *attitude of good will* and a desire to help and protect, the barriers of race prejudice must be broken down. The student must come to regard him as a human being who is as worthy as himself, and in fact, probably not very different from himself. An attitude in order to be friendly has first of all to be freed from the emotional bias involved in the assumption of one's own superiority. One must view one's fellows, whether they attract or repel one, in an impartial, objective-minded way. Suppose now, that we suddenly ask the student to shift his approach and to look at the downtrodden alien through the eyes of a *scientist*. Our aim now is to lead the student not to help, but to analyze; not to sympathize with the subject nor to protect him, but to describe him exactly as he is. We are at once struck by the fact that the student's attitude toward the alien must be much the same as when he took toward him the altruistic approach. Again the student must regard him as a human being who has not been proved to be essentially different from himself. In order to know and to describe such a person as he really is, it is again essential to eliminate emotional prejudice and all assumptions regarding the observer's superiority to the individual studied. He must view him objectively or fail in his task, not only as a helper, but as a scientist.

The same considerations apply to the development of tolerance and the attitude of fair play, as well as to the disinclination to spread rumors, to bear false witness, or to render harsh judgments against those who differ from us in their conduct or their views. The individual who approaches his world through the immediate contacts of an altruist and a scientist refuses to indulge in these practices not only because of his *fellow feeling* for the person accused, but because of his *scientific habit* of de-

scribing things exactly as they are. Scientific caution in investigating nature is the counterpart of fair-mindedness in social relationships if indeed it is not the same thing. By helping each other in this way, the scientific and the altruistic phases bring a greater unity to the character of the individual concerned. Have we not here the definite beginnings of a transvaluation, of that carrying over of ideals from one situation to another which is the very essence of character training?

In humility we find another virtue which can be fostered through the scientific, artistic, social, and religious approaches alike, if we but set the stage for an immediacy of experience. The motive of self-abnegation, the sacrifice of one's own power and advancement for more cherished objectives is psychologically akin to, if not identical with, a fundamental attitude of a scientist. It is an approach at least which all scientists, in some measure, must learn. The career of a scientific student frequently begins with a cocksureness, a readiness to generalize far beyond his data, and a penchant for setting up theories of his own, for dogmatizing about them, and for holding them inviolable against change. The subsequent trend of his progress, however, is a record of stages of increasing humility, as there gradually dawns upon him the vastness of his problem, the inscrutable complexity of nature, the tentative validity of all generalizations, and the necessity of being ready to relinquish his favorite hypothesis at any moment. I know of no better teaching of the wisdom of self-effacement than is afforded by training in a scientific laboratory and in the exploration of some modest portion of our natural universe.

But if science and social relationships are important fields for the acquiring of a humble, self-denying, and inquiring spirit, no less can be said for art. The approach to experience through the quest of beauty demands of an artist a self-surrender, a losing of one's life in order to find it. That universal and enduring quality of the world's masterpieces, sincerity, means that the artist has been willing and able to lay aside his preconceptions and to allow the nuances of his subject to flood in upon him in their true character. Notwithstanding that personal touch

which is characteristic of all art, the canon of sincerity prescribes this anchorage in reality, this forsaking of ostentation, mannerism, and the bizarre, in order that the beauty which the artist sees may be made to live upon his canvas. An artist must become humble in the presence of something which is more universal and enduring than himself. He must lose himself for the time in the natural world from which his impressions originate before he can create from those impressions an object of authentic and lasting appeal.

A forceful example of how a single immediate experience can bring unity and grandeur to an individual by allowing him to express many phases of his character in a single act is shown in the famous judgment of Jesus regarding the woman taken in adultery. In this episode he was, first of all, a humanitarian, desiring to protect and help rather than to punish. He displayed the traits of tolerance and sympathy. He was a friend. But beyond this, he showed, it seems to me, the characteristic of a scientist, an artist, a teacher, and a physician. Only a man who appreciated the values of scientists could have done what Jesus did. For combined with the courage to oppose the judgment of others who were biased, there was in his act the humility of a man who would not undertake judgment himself and who recognized that, since all men are prone to errors, human pronouncements cannot be taken at their face value. There was also a supreme test of the scientific attitude in his ability to lay aside tradition, prejudice, and prudery and to see the matter in an objective light. Braving the theological conviction that here was an offense against an angry God, he preferred the evidence of experience as provided by his own senses and his reason. He saw adultery as an evil only in so far as it brought unhappiness and failure in human lives; and he refused to be afraid of sin either in others or in himself. The scientific vision which gave him an insight into the crises of his own life and the lives of others also gave him the courage to face those crises in an objective manner. But the attitudes of the humanitarian and the scientist did not exhaust the revelation of character which this incident made possible. There seems also to have entered into it something of the feeling

of the artist. For the woman's offense was deplorable not so much because it was a breach of a divine commandment as because 'sin,' being essentially a conflict and lack of harmony within a personality, is intrinsically ugly. This, Jesus may have recognized when he exhorted her to, "Go and sin no more." And finally, the episode gave an opportunity for self-expression in the functions of a guide and healer. The entire approach of Jesus toward the woman had probably been a revelation to her that her greatest sin was, after all, against herself, that it lay in an inner conflict between two sides of her own nature, and that its cure rested not in some super-human forgiveness, but in an honest effort to make herself once more whole.

Now the point of all this for educators is that these transvaluations of experience, these opportunities for the revealing of a complete personality in one characteristic act, are possible only when the contact between an individual and his world is immediate. Unless Jesus had mingled with men and women of all sorts, unless he had entered into a close relation of penetrating understanding, of intimate give and take, with his human materials, he never could have expressed in this one contact all those phases of his nature. We can scarcely imagine that any study of canonical law or priestcraft, or years spent in the Temple in contemplation of the Holy of Holies, would have given him so full a development of character. If he had judged the offender from the institutional standards of his time, he would probably have confined the issue strictly to its legal and theological merits. He might have delivered a mechanical justice, one which fitted the crime but not the offender, an unalterable punishment for a stated sin. Such a judgment would have been an extract from the code of an institution, not the expression of a personality. It could never have given play to a scientist, an artist, a humanist, or a physician, but only to a theologian. It would have been based upon the remote purpose of safeguarding the Law or Society, rather than upon the immediate, individual needs of a human life.

And so with the situations in which the youths of today must develop the resources of their personalities. The values of natural

science for the training of character can never be realized unless a student can work directly with his materials, setting up experiments, reacting to changes in what he sees, framing and testing hypotheses, and learning to subordinate himself to the truth which he is seeking. These values cannot be inculcated by reading textbooks nor by listening to lectures, however useful for other purposes these sources may be; neither can they be gained through mastering the applications of science for the remoter purposes of technology. Instruction in the humanities and the social sciences will be equally futile for character if teachers substitute classroom formulas for actual experiences with individuals in their immediate relationships. If Jesus could not have told what to do with the woman taken in adultery through a perusal of laws and institutional codes, neither can students of the social sciences today. Traits of tolerance and fair play may be extolled from the lecture platform; but they will mean little unless students have an opportunity to acquire them in the scene of human conflict, struggle, and adjustment. A college professor, early in the school year, gave his students a test which measured their proneness to 'racial bigotry' as shown in estimating the intelligence of different races. These students then took an extended course of lectures and reading dealing with the scientific facts of racial and cultural differences, a course which contradicted and discredited many of the popular racial prejudices. After this period of training he tested them again. To his dismay he found that, so far as the intimate, personal attitudes of his students were concerned, his teaching had been largely in vain. Although his evidence for racial tolerance and his plea for truth had seemed convincing, although the students had mastered the facts of the course in an intellectual way, their personal attitudes regarding the abilities of members of unpopular races had remained practically unchanged.<sup>1</sup> Having had little or no direct contact with aliens, nor any opportunity to re-evaluate their racial experiences in terms of realities, no fundamental change of view had been

---

<sup>1</sup> See Young, Donald, "Some Effects of a Course in American Race Problems on the Race Prejudice of 450 Undergraduates," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1927, pp. 235-42.



produced. There is, it seems, no effective substitute for immediacy in training students to appreciate and adopt ideals of objective accuracy, of tolerance, and of fair play.

The reference just made to the discrepancy between racial knowledge and racial feelings leads us to one of the most important advantages of immediacy in character development. An immediate relationship of the student to the object of his study is the only sure means by which a thorough understanding of one's own motives can be acquired. Only through the trial and error of direct experience can we attain true insight and learn in our contacts with our fellow men to see ourselves as we are. When our self-appraisal is checked by crude, raw facts, rather than the rationalization of seeing ourselves in our rôle in some institution, we can discover whether we have been acting upon knowledge or upon self-deception. Insight into our own motives also gives us better understanding of social movements and of agencies of social control; for the individuals who direct and comprise these broad phenomena are human beings with motives similar to our own. And finally, insight is a key to our own mental health, allaying our anxieties, helping us to face crises in their objective significance, releasing our energies from imprisoning conflicts, and directing us toward more realistic and constructive adjustments. To gain such advantages it is only necessary that we step down from our distant, vicarious, segmentalized, and institutional education, and lead the student by the hand into experiences in which he can see himself as he truly is, where he can view his own nature as tested and revealed by first-hand contacts with the people about him.

If there is to be found, in this troubled age, any hope for the unfolding of consistent and harmonious personalities in our youths, such hope must lie in restoring immediacy both to education and to life. It requires that we teach our young through situations which proffer the whole of life rather than its fragments, which call for manipulation and interaction rather than stereotyped aloofness, and which place the realization of the educational purpose in the present rather than in the future. The great difficulty has been that we have broken education up

into compartments, thus preventing the entire individual from functioning through successive experiences. These compartments tend to segmentalize experience and to emphasize the formal rather than the content phase of living. The specialized demands in business, industry, and vocations generally have led us to divide education into pigeonholes to fit these various specialties. And now that we are reaping the fruits of our methods, now that we witness the insecurity of lives with no guiding philosophies of their own, we hasten to make amends by creating new pigeonholes in our educational program. We establish courses for personality training, departments of religious instruction, and research endowments for character education. These devices are of doubtful value. Through them we try to cover our deficiency by the very methods which have brought this deficiency about. We attempt to restore that integrity of which compartmentalization has robbed our lives by the expedient of setting up another compartment.

## IX

In the scope of this essay it is impossible to canvass thoroughly the need of immediacy in modern educational practice. We can point, however, to a few outstanding instances. There is, first, a tendency to substitute textbooks for laboratories, and descriptions of life for contacts with living things. The popular stereotype of the college professor seems to be that of a man who lives wholly in a world of books. Even where laboratory training is emphasized, students are often placed in a position of trying to find some result which their teacher expects them to find. I once stood over a high school boy for a long time waiting for him to describe the capillary phenomenon as observed in a drinking tube thrust into a glass of water. I asked him to examine the situation for himself and tell everything he saw; then I waited in vain while he stared pensively at the apparatus. No suggestion of the feeling of immediacy was present in his attitude: his habits of observation were apparently set in grooves. It did not occur to him to manipulate his materials, to react to them, or even to place his own body in different positions for better observation. His purpose was not the satisfaction of an immediate scientific

interest, but only the remoter desire to answer my question and to pass the test I had put before him; he was a pupil, and nothing more. After suggesting certain manipulations and asking him many leading questions, I finally secured from him the observation that the level of the water in the tube was higher than that in the glass. When I asked why he had not reported so simple and obvious a fact a long while ago, he answered, "But I didn't know that was what you wanted me to see." Surely a child of normal inquisitiveness taught under the method of immediacy would not wait for some authority to tell him what to observe in a phenomenon directly before him. He would himself find a zest in reacting to every detail of the situation, in discovering the aspects which contradicted his usual experience, and in allowing his fancy to dwell curiously upon their explanation.

Another offense against immediacy in introductory science is the common practice of coloring a child's observation by the use of anthropomorphic and other figurative terms. Even recognized teachers of biology, in talking to children about insects, sometimes employ such terms as 'nurse-ants,' 'workers,' 'the queen,' and similar unfortunate expressions. Such usage has probably been an obstacle rather than a help to many a student. For as soon as one conceives of a certain ant as a worker or a nurse, not only does he have a picture which is probably false or inaccurate, but the profound mysteries which still surround such living creatures even for the most advanced biologist are explained away. Why should a student experiment with or manipulate an insect to see what it is doing, when the information that it is a 'worker' makes everything so clear? The immediate interest in investigation is thus shunted off into the remote, quasi-utilitarian purpose of accounting verbally, and according to human stereotypes, for the part played by the ant in the situation of the hive. Teaching of this sort sacrifices immediacy for a cheap sensationalism. Through it we attempt to catch a child's interest and to inform him in simple and striking images about things which we ourselves do not understand. In the poverty of our capacity for immediate perceptions, we tend to read into the universe the habits and preconceptions found in our human

society. We seek to institutionalize nature.

In the professional schools, with the accent of their leaders upon distant utility, the issue between immediacy and institutionalism often takes an acute form. Many students of medicine to whom numerous phases of their instruction open up fascinating avenues of research are driven, through the professionalism of their teachers, toward the exclusive goal of clinical technology. I have heard professors in law schools deplore the fact that they are obliged to relinquish the aim of legal research in order to make their colleges into trade schools graduating practicing lawyers. Even in schools devoted primarily to self-expression, in colleges of fine arts, we find a tendency to sacrifice the free play of students' aesthetic interests to the growing emphasis upon commercialized art. Our urge for training larger numbers of individuals for the more efficient pursuit of some calling has given rise to a mushroom growth of educational and vocational tests. We have invented not only the I. Q., but a long array of quotients by which we record the capacity or training of students in many directions. As one author writing on institutions has put it: "The school is the testing, selecting, and distributing agency *par excellence*; it examines, quizzes, grades, evaluates, eliminates, and promotes future citizens, and assigns, in a measure, to social position."<sup>2</sup> Psychological measurement, however, usually implies the evaluation of our capacities for some ulterior, practical objective, rather than their expression and enjoyment for themselves. And in this emphasis upon the efficiency of our talents rather than upon the satisfaction we derive from them, we are tending away from the education of immediacy toward a kind of vocational engineering. It is as though our capacities for achievement were taken away from us as individuals and made the servants of a mysterious being called Society.

Vocational guidance, as seen from the standpoint of institutionalism, is the process of exhibiting to one's client the various possible callings, of showing him the number already employed, and the opportunities presented for the future. The procedure is usually to take the jobs now open and select and adjust indi-

<sup>2</sup> Hertzler, J. O., *Social Institutions*, McGraw-Hill Book Co. (1929), p. 177.

viduals to fill them. From the standpoint of immediacy, however, the task is to link an individual with his vocation by studying the individual first. It is to seek not the individual for the job, but the job for the individual. And this means that in studying his client our vocational adviser must not restrict the consideration of possible occupations to those which are customarily offered. He must employ more intimate, penetrating, and comprehensive methods of understanding his individuals than those afforded by tests which follow the conventional vocational patterns. Then too, he must take into account not only certain traits which happen to be significant for certain occupations, but the individual's entire range of characteristics. The aim of the exponent of immediacy is not to see that all the jobs of society get filled by those having the suitable capacity, but to see that all the capacities of an individual, or at least the larger proportion of them, receive expression in the job which 'society' offers.

## X

In the preceding pages I have tried to show the value of immediacy throughout many of the issues with which educators are concerned. The significance of this method is realized in the training of students' attitudes toward persons and things, in the technique of instruction, in the humanizing of the curriculum, in the preparation for leisure, in the formation of character, in the choice of a vocation, and in one's philosophy of life. There still remains, however, an aspect of immediacy implicit in every subject we have so far discussed, an aspect which is important in education from infancy onward. I refer to the personal relationship between student and teacher. Immediacy in the contact between teacher and pupil calls for a direct exchange of ideas and experiences, the one continuously adjusting himself intellectually to the other somewhat after the dialectic method of the ancient philosophers. It requires also that a student shall be free to enter into this interchange with every phase of his intellectual being, and that he shall experience an immediate rather than an ulterior satisfaction in such an association. In order to maintain the present scale and the tempo of education, we have

largely sacrificed, through mass instruction, the opportunities for such contacts between teachers and students. A few efforts have been made to develop tutorial methods in America after the plan of English universities, and to establish experimental liberal colleges. On the whole, however, these efforts have not won much popularity or success. Since the attitude of competition has now manifested itself not only in business but in scholarship, the main opportunity of the professor for advancement lies not in teaching, but in activities having a greater value for publicity. The professor must make his name not as a teacher primarily, but as an authority in his particular subject. The institutionalism which has made our education so efficient from a practical standpoint has belittled the experience of teaching and has tended to make the classroom a place of dull routine for teacher and pupil alike.

If, therefore, a parent imagines that in sending his children to college he is bringing them into intimate, broadening contact with great scholars and with cultivated personalities, his hope is often likely to be an illusion. Modern college students usually listen to a professor only in a certain limited field of knowledge, and without the opportunity of exchanging ideas with him even upon that one subject. They may sit through an entire semester without acquiring a glimpse of the professor's experience in fields other than that covered by the course. This condition naturally reacts upon the students. They come to feel that notwithstanding the visible equipment of the university, the stir and bustle of teaching about them, or the fine words spoken at convocation and commencement, there is, after all, no one who really cares in a personal way whether they learn anything or not. There is only the abstract institution, the University, which they vaguely feel to be hovering about them, directed by a distant president whom they rarely see. In such an atmosphere scholarship declines, and cynicism, opportunism, and indifference take its place. The next logical step is the loss to the students of any significance of a college degree beyond its commercial value, and the consequent resort to bluffing, cribbing, and other practices by which it may be conveniently attained. Some of the more

serious students long for an opportunity to talk in a face to face manner with their instructors; and a few of them manage occasionally to break through the barriers. In many of our colleges, however, they seem to have given up the attempt. Faculty and student body tend to live in two different worlds; and many students look with suspicion, even with contempt, upon classmates who attempt a closer acquaintance with their professors outside of class.

The decline of immediacy in education is robbing not only the students but the teachers themselves of some of the greatest satisfactions of their calling. There has sometimes been noticed among secondary and grade school teachers a certain frustrated, apathetic manner which has been referred to as the 'teacher personality.' Being possessed of natural human interests, sympathies, and desires for affection, a teacher finds these feelings continually aroused in herself by the children or adolescents in her charge. But though awakened, these sentiments rarely have an opportunity to reach their natural fulfillment in the contacts afforded by the routine of school. The relation of immediacy between teacher and pupil having been lost, there is produced a hopeless impasse. No matter how deeply a teacher may be interested in her pupils, no matter what she may have to offer them from her greater maturity, regardless of how she may need their companionship or they hers, her relationship to them is usually limited to such subjects as Caesar's Gallic wars or the principles of English composition. This frustration of her emotional life makes her less effective not only in dealing with her students, but in the broader relationships of community and civic life. Her feeling is like the loneliness of a stranger in the midst of a great city: interesting people, students surging everywhere about her, but none with whom she can associate as one whole personality with another. Circumscribed in her opportunities for expression, such a teacher may become over-emotional in her particular field. She may develop a pedantic manner and a trying exactitude.

An evil closely related to the loss of contact between teachers and students, and one which is largely responsible for the latter, is the organization of secondary schools and colleges into sharply

separated departments of instruction. As the growth of knowledge has compelled scholars to specialize more narrowly, these departments—which have grown up also as a matter of administrative convenience—have brought with them a false sense of division within the students' world. There are, of course, no clearly separate realms of human experience, no such compartments as physics, chemistry, or biology in nature. Art, science, philosophy, history, economics, and religion are not boxed up in separate departments of human existence. By setting up these classifications in our teaching we create gaps in a student's perspective which are hard to bridge. The further result of departmentalization is the limiting of the relation between the teacher and the student, and the diminishing of the opportunity for immediacy in this relationship. For one can encounter a whole personality only when one can meet an individual in a variety of unrestricted intellectual and social contacts. Under rigid specialization of instruction the teacher tends to become a mere guide book to a particular laboratory or an index to the shelves of a library. He is classified and labelled with the mark of his own subject.

The roots of departmental cleavage extend deeply into personal motives and institutional habits. One obvious advantage of the system lies, of course, in its convenience for arranging students' programs and for adjusting college curricula to the vocational training needed for a practical world. Other sources, however, only too little recognized, have been the jealousies between professors, their desire to be classed, professionally, under a distinct and unique discipline, and their competition for appropriations and influence by pressing their claims, not as individuals, but through their 'department.' There are also occasional pressures exerted from above which tend to keep the partitions rigid. The ideology of education as conducted by departments rather than by individual professors affords a convenient and respectable control of academic utterance. Sometimes in the interests of better instruction, but also unfortunately as a concealed method of controlling teaching, professors have been admonished by higher officials to 'stick to their subjects.' This injunction carries an appearance of justification since, in this specialized era, no man



can be a thorough master of more than one field. Furthermore, one occasionally finds a teacher who abuses the right of academic freedom by inflicting upon his students his own private brand of propaganda or bias. The right, however, to judge in all cases whether a professor is overstepping the bounds of truth and propriety in his teaching is a dangerous one to be entrusted to any single officer. The entire notion of 'keeping within one's field' seems to be based upon the fallacy that nature and human experience are capable of division into fields. Education which is offered in a manner entirely detached from the other interests of the students is not true education at all. It is a mistake to assume that when these fields have been separately presented to a student he will somehow be able to integrate all this knowledge and to employ it in the formation of a consistent and unified character of his own. In order to help him with such an integration, he needs the views of his professor not only in a particular subject, but in other matters as well. He needs the example of a person of greater maturity who has had to meet some of the issues which now face the student, and has learned to apply the experience gained in one field to the problems of another. A student is not obliged to accept literally his professor's philosophy of life; there is little danger that he will. But if he is to develop a unique and consistent personality of his own in these days when so many of the older standards are breaking down, he must have a guide of some sort. Shall we deprive him, through our growing trend toward institutionalism, of the opportunity to learn by contact with an older individual who has achieved for himself some measure of stability and poise?

Teachers are not merely the transmitters, but the makers, of 'institutions.' They do not, of course, prescribe new systems, rules, and formulas in the same way as a judge or a legislator. Nevertheless, in making out of these systems a telic reality through inculcating institutional habits in succeeding generations, they bring them out of the realm of shadowy abstractions into the working relationships of daily life. Without the rôle of teachers and parents in the formation of institutional habits, institutions would not exist as a significant part of human behavior. Whether educators voluntarily accept the responsibility or not, this fact

must be acknowledged. If our school procedures are ever to fulfill the function of the training of citizens for intelligent civic participation, the rôle of an educator as a maker of institutions must be taken more seriously than it is today. In teaching a child the Constitution of the United States, the teacher is not merely transmitting this Constitution from one generation to the next. He is making it anew in each generation. If that document is a futile affair, unrelated to our present need and requiring revision, then in teaching it to our youths the teacher is making a defective institution of government. Such a realization though startlingly opposed to the traditional view of the teacher's function is the only hope we have of overcoming our present political ineptitude through educational means. It is the only hope for people who have come to accept institutions as wiser than individuals and to allow stereotyped practices to take the place of their own critical thinking. An educator, rightly regarded, is not a functionary helping to keep the institutions of society running; he is a guide of youths who will one day be greater than their institutions and will change them according to individual human needs.

## XI

Probably most of the shortcomings in educational method are in part due to the policy of regarding education primarily as a training for the future. Life cannot be divided without distortion into a period of preparation for living followed by the period of living itself. The only worthwhile school for life is life. Fully to realize one's potentialities, one's vocation must grow into one's personality; the personality should not be cast in the mold of a particular vocation. A human being is not to be conceived as a cell in the 'body politic,' but as an individual having independent interests and claiming a career of his own. The years of education, according to the principle of immediacy, are not a period of preparation for life's activity; they are the first stage of that activity. Teaching is not a technique for the pursuit of later interests, but an introduction of the individual to his interests themselves. Interest needs no preparation in order to function; it goes on as a part of an individual's life from the very start. The acquisition of even the most rudimentary habits.

such as learning to eat or to walk, is more than a mere preparation for future living. It is an instance of immediacy in the successive responses of an individual to his environment. It is an absorbing play of his interests, a satisfaction of his present purpose in the act itself, and a summoning of all the bodily resources of which he is capable. If we could abolish the future reference altogether and think of school or college as a place where a youth so lives as to get the most out of his life for that particular time, the total gain might more than compensate for any loss of specialized instruction which might result.

We have found reason, also, to mistrust the definition of education as a means of transmitting the accumulated culture of the race. By the time the youth who has been brought up under such an educational theory has arrived at college he has not only acquired the sounder wisdom of his cultural heritage, but has probably become so indoctrinated also with its fictions that an educator's first task is to get him to unlearn much that he has previously acquired. We do not sufficiently realize how difficult it is for a child of today, nurtured through the artificial conveniences and curriculum of the modern home and school, to encounter, even in imagination, the original environment of the race for which he is biologically adapted, or to attain for himself the experience of making biological adjustments to nature. To quote the words of a contemporary social student regarding the social changes wrought through civilization:

He [man] is no longer adapted directly to the natural world, at least in any preponderating degree, but he is adapted to it indirectly through his bio-social environment of men coöperating through the use of language in the collective forms of customs, folkways, conventions, mores, etc. This coöperating bio-social environment he built up as a buffer or protector between himself and the remorseless natural world with which in his early history he came so rudely and harshly in contact. . . . Man has integrated and projected this environment for himself as a sort of bulwark or protection against nature. . . .<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Bernard, L. L., *Introduction to Social Psychology*, Henry Holt and Co. (1926), pp. 81, 84. Quoted with slight changes by permission of the author.

Such is the cultural milieu into which the child, adapted at birth only to a primitive biological environment, is to be inducted. Those who regard the continuity of this protective societal bulwark as of primary importance maintain that the teacher's function is to instruct the youth in its elements and in the part in its functioning which he as a future citizen is to play. With such a philosophy of education, however, the theory of immediacy stands in direct contradiction. Although not advocating a method so subversive as suddenly to imperil this institutional bulwark or to render the welfare of the individuals within it insecure, an exponent of immediacy nevertheless is not interested principally in its preservation. He regards the chief function of education to be not the mastering of this man-made, bio-social environment which protects individuals against nature, but the encouragement of individuals to break through it at many points and to get back to an appreciation of nature in its relatively primitive state.

Hence, far from being the mere transmission of a matured culture, the function of immediacy is to restore to children that which has been lost to adults, to give back to students a world of natural objects to which they can respond in an intimate and penetrating manner, and a community of individuals with whom they can experience direct, purposeful, and unifying contacts. The believer in such a plan will try to interest children not so much in airplanes and automobiles, as in gravitation, electricity, and chemical reactions. He will dwell not so much upon the improving of domestic animals or the augmenting of crops (useful as such knowledge may be) as upon the exploring of the laws of living things. He will not induct a child into a world of cinemas, radios, and player-pianos, nor take him (except occasionally and incidentally) to picture galleries and concerts. He will, on the other hand, encourage him to create something effective and beautiful with his own hands, out of his own simple materials, and in his own way. An educator who comes to believe in immediacy will no longer dilate upon the structure of government, the powers conferred by the Constitution, or the formal duties of the citizen. Instead, he will show the students some actual officials in operation and some of the intimate workings

of political and economic behavior. He will not say much about an abstract public opinion, but will help individuals to gain an insight into their own opinions and to understand the motives of others around them. There will be little stressing of the ideals of institutions, but an endeavor to teach young people individually to reflect upon their own ideals and to realize them through their social contacts.

Under a philosophy of immediacy we shall give up our sorting of a student's world into convenient departments, and shall establish in its stead a full, experimental contact with every object of study and with whole individuals in all their interests and relationships. On that blank page, the unseen potentialities of an infant, there will be written the story not merely of institutions but of men, not merely the culture and institutional habits of the race, but a moving record of the individual's own experience, an epic of all those scenes in which, faring forth alone, he shall have touched upon the poignant realities and mysteries of life.

**RELIGIOUS**



---

---

## XX

### THE GOD OF CHURCHES

---

---

A CHURCH-GOER probably has two religions instead of one. He has, first, a personal faith or working philosophy. He has a belief, however vague, regarding the universe, and a set of values which are peculiarly his own. His other religion consists of the formulations accepted in the group to which he belongs. The first of these, the individual's personal religion, is not given to him directly by his outer environment or by the 'social group.' It arises as a projection of his own feelings; it comes from his inner struggles, bafflements, aspirations, and longings. Religion in this use of the word is an intimate expression of a human personality. But personalities are everywhere unique. And therefore the term God, in its most vital and intimate sense, is likely to mean something a little different for every person. The background of experience from which an individual's faith is projected is, moreover, so intangible and so rich with inarticulated feelings that it cannot be translated into words. Hence we can never really know whether the values of another person and his impression of the deity are similar to our own. Religion of the personal type not only differs with the individual, but resists all attempts at its communication to others.

Consider now the situation which arises when the possessor of such a religion joins with his fellows in common worship. The Being whom he now hears addressed by many through hymns, responses, and supplications, can scarcely be the intimate personal deity to which we have referred. It is, rather, a schematic copy or symbol of that deity, a collective, stereotyped formula adopted for the purpose of combining the views of all communicants into one picture. This fact, however, is usually not realized by the worshipper. Finding himself in sympathy with the occasion, and feeling the more reverent as he conforms to the reverent attitudes of those about him, he accepts the symbol uncritically and believes



for the time that this God, as formulated in church creed and ritual, is exactly the same as his. The consequence of this substitution is significant. Since each worshipper accepts the God to whom the minister prays as his own, and since the minister is obviously addressing only *one* God, it follows that the deity of one individual must be the God of all. The validity of this Supreme Being no longer seems to rest upon the inner experience of the communicants, but upon the fact that all men are worshipping him together. His attributes are not wrought out by each person from the background of his own life, but are established for all by the common creed or doctrine of the church. An individual may doubt his own theistic conception and may hold it merely as an hypothesis, a provisional statement of realities beyond his ken; but he cannot doubt that which seems to him the experience of all mankind. The bowing and outward ritual of his fellows may fail as a true utterance of the religious faiths to which they, as individuals, have come. They may be kneeling to Gods other than his. But this possibility is forgotten under the spell of the one true deity who seems to hear their collective supplication. The Ultimate Reality is now no longer tentative, immanent, and vague in conception, but definite, transcendent, and final. To the God of Churches all knees must bow and every heart must give allegiance.

Something like this, no doubt, has happened in the history of the Christian Church. The movement began with twelve men imbued with a strong, personal, religious faith, and held together by the personality and leadership of a thirteenth. In their common life and sharing of experiences probably very little of a dogmatic or doctrinal sort was said concerning the Supreme Being. The method of Jesus seemed to be to help each of his followers to develop his own insight into spiritual matters. He encouraged them to live out their own religion in their daily lives. After the master's death the band was augmented by thousands of persons of every race, temperament, and previous conviction. Individual differences of viewpoint were minimized and obliterated in the universal conversion to the new belief. One great fact was recognized: they were all Christians, and their communal worship de-

manded that there should be One True God, and that he should fulfill in his nature the postulates of their common faith. The man, Jesus, with his immediate personal appeal to men and women, had passed away; but in his place there was erected the image of the Christ, which became the accepted object of the love and veneration of Christians, and was merged by the labor of early theologians into the symbol of the God-head. A church was established which came to be regarded as a legacy given by Christ himself, through the hands of the apostles, to mankind. To the priests of this church fell the duty of supplicating the deity on behalf of the communicants, and of preserving his offices and his established character. If this account is true, the traditional God of Christianity is known to us only as a social image, arising at a definite historic period from the combined responses of a group of worshippers.

But in making the image of this deity clear and definite, that is, in establishing him as the One True God, ecclesiastics also rendered him immune to questioning. An individual, so far as his personal religious view was concerned, was usually permitted all the liberty he desired. He could reëxamine his own faith from time to time, and could modify or enlarge his theistic conception as he saw fit. But the public expression of such a view could not be tolerated. The existence and supreme authority of the God of the Church must never be brought into question. This attitude, though somewhat mollified, has continued down to the present day. For the individual to revise his personal religion is felt to be an evidence of intellectual growth: it means the changing an inadequate picture for a better one. To demand as some have done, that the '*churches*' scrap their deity is considered not wisdom, but blasphemy; for the God of Churches is not regarded as any one's conception of God, but as God himself. However unsuited the early Christian image may be for the needs of a modern world, it must never be disturbed. When a modernist calls upon ministers to abandon the traditional concepts and build their religious foundations anew, he is usually met by a shocked and angry protest and many doors are closed against him. For though its individual members may change, it is believed by many

that the Church itself never alters. Through tradition and common worship its deity has been removed from immanence in human lives and projected into the heavens. The belief in his transcendence is a part of the social consciousness of men and women.

## II

A word of caution must now be added. I have suggested that the belief in a transcendent God of definite attributes is fostered by the very nature of religious institutions. But this does not mean that without churches no such supernatural conception would exist. Men in primitive times have projected their deity upon the basis of their own personal contacts with nature. Without ecclesiastical leadership, however, such theistic cosmologies would probably have remained in the realm of individual fantasy, or at most would have become merely tribal folklore. They could scarcely have acquired the significance which comes from a priestcraft organized for their public maintenance. Or again, it might be objected that the tracing of the orthodox conception to institutional worship does not prove that this conception is false. True enough. The God described in the theology of orthodox churches may exist—or he may not. Intelligent people differ widely in the convictions to which their faith has led them. I am advancing here no opinion concerning the ultimate grounds of religious faith, but am attempting to show that, without regard for its ultimate validity, the notion of a definite, transcendent deity is strengthened and made more plausible by the psychology of communal worship, particularly when such worship is organized, developed through church tradition, and directed by an ordained leader. By glossing over personal differences among the members, institutionalized worship gives rise to the unwarranted impression that all are in thorough agreement regarding the deity. The problem of his nature is therefore no longer considered vague and speculative, but definitely solved for all time. The worshipper accordingly, accepts, as the ultimate authority, the creeds of churchmen rather than the testimony of his own experience. Institutionalism has not only produced among communicants an unjustifiably final impression of

God, but it has endowed him with characteristics which, if still credited in our modern age, must lead to the setting up of compartments through which religion is separated from the remainder of human experience. Through this process creeds finally become sacrosanct. Ministers and communicants grow reluctant to reëxamine their own thinking and intolerant toward the questioning of others.

It might be objected from another quarter that I have here exaggerated the personal phases of religion in contrast with the communal, and have assumed too much in the matter of individual differences. After all, have not the conceptions taught in churches been so long held that they have become the personal religion of many? A great number of persons, through timidity, inability, or indifference, have never arrived at a conclusion of their own, and perhaps never will. Church doctrines, though admittedly old-fashioned, are probably better for such people than no religion at all. There are two serious weaknesses in this argument. First, it is based upon the false assumption that a helpful religion does not of necessity grow out of a human need, but can be acquired as a gift or a revelation from an outside source. To this I reply that if a man himself is not interested in seeking a truer adaptation to his universe, such an adjustment cannot be made for him through a creed formulated by another and transmitted as if from on high.

In the second place, the objection overlooks the probability that almost every person has some feeling or aspiration, some view of living, however unformulated, which can fairly be called a religion, and that by the developing of this experience a useful growth can be attained. To overlook this subjective basis and to force upon an individual an arbitrary and final image of the deity is to close to him all avenues of creative religious expression. It is precisely because such a notion has been taught for generations to children under church auspices that the personal and intellectual side of religion has remained, for many people, in an infantile condition. So deeply fixed are their early emotional habits that whenever the urge comes upon them for the quest of a more mature religion they shrink back in confusion

and fear. When we were children many of us were told that ghosts lurk in dark places. As we grew older we began to doubt this statement; yet we could not bring ourselves calmly to investigate. What if ghosts really existed after all? In that case to offend them by making an investigation would have been a risky business. The fear of the Lord, as taught in some churches, is much like the fear of the dark. If we can but throw it aside long enough to explore the mysterious corners, our vision at once enlarges. God is for us no longer an avenging spirit ready to punish doubters, nor yet the watchful Father; but, for many of us at least, a profound and impersonal mystery which pervades the universe and lies far beyond our present comprehension.

If it were not for such early emotional conditioning and the conviction that doubt and unbelief are sin, there would probably be no serious conflict in individuals between the interests of religion and science. An individual would desire to shape his life toward his idea of the good, and would probably formulate his own view of the deity; but he would feel free at all times to modify his conception or to discard it altogether as his horizon widened. Many heads of religious institutions, on the other hand, have in the past been ill-disposed toward intellectual inquiry. It was not so much individual communicants as the leaders of 'the church' who were incensed by the teachings of Galileo and Copernicus. And in our own day, though many church members have become disturbed over Darwin, the actual suppression of the public teaching of evolution in certain localities has come largely through the members of the clerical profession, aided by elders and others having some official or vested interest in church affairs. In the latter days, to be sure, there appears to have come a change. Now that the value of scientific research has been established beyond question, churchmen are rushing forward with the claim that there can be no real conflict between science and religion. This change, however, scarcely reaches below the surface. It is probably more of a gesture than a sincere conviction for which sacrifices will be made. In spite of lip service to the wonders of science, the belief in the traditional God of Churches is still in large measure retained and inculcated in the young. Creeds de-

claring a belief in miracles continue to be recited weekly by thousands of worshippers. The God of many Sunday schools is still an omnipotent spiritual person. Some churchmen take refuge behind the argument that, though they themselves pronounce the old creeds with mental reservations, these creeds are still necessary as symbols which can be understood by the masses. But is this answer sincere? If so, what efforts are these very ministers making to bring the religious education of their following up to a more enlightened level? Rooted in the psychology of collective worship and the emotional life of childhood, conferring not only a power to control but an immunity from criticism, the old formulations are still maintained against the urgent and growing need for a more liberal view.

### III

Among the consequences of this unassailable theology, not the least unfortunate is the support it gives to mystical notions concerning 'the church.' Collective worship, as we have noted, strengthens the conviction that the deity who is being invoked is the One True God. His precise qualities, however, and the proper means of approaching him are, as far as individuals are concerned, still in a formless and uncertain stage. This gap between divine reality and human ignorance must be bridged; and it is only natural that the responsibility should fall upon the shoulders of those who lead the common worship. But here a difficulty arises. The authority of any human leader, no matter how wise and capable he may be, is, in supernatural matters, never fully convincing. There has therefore come into being the notion of the divinely established Church, a sacred institution over and above the heads of the worshippers, which guides their efforts and affords a bridge between finite, human understanding and an infinite intelligence. Ministers, priests, and popes are accepted as the spokesmen of this institution. They are believed to impart not their own wisdom, but the law and will of God. Into this symbol of The Church there is projected not only the weight of deliberated and consistent doctrine, but the luster of an old tradition and fellowship with a congregation of the redeemed

extending over the earth and backward into remote ages. The Church is felt to be no mere human aggregation of seekers after truth, but a higher, infallible, spiritual agency which leaps across the gap left by man's limitations and communicates directly with the unseen. Just as the deity has been established through the social theistic image of those who are worshipping together, so there is projected from the worshippers themselves the image of a Universal Church. Between a transcendental God and man there hovers the shadow of the Church Transcendent.

One holy Church of God appears  
Through every age and race,  
Unwasted by the lapse of years,  
Unchanged by changing place.

From oldest time, on farthest shores,  
Beneath the pine or palm,  
One Unseen Presence she adores,  
With silence or with psalm.

Her priests are all God's faithful sons,  
To serve the world raised up;  
The pure in heart her baptized ones;  
Love, her communion-cup.

The truth is her prophetic gift,  
The soul her sacred page;  
And feet on mercy's errands swift  
Do make her pilgrimage.

It was inevitable that this belief regarding 'the Church' should have developed as a part of communal worship. It serves well the communicant who wishes to place the burden of his thinking upon other, and as he believes, more competent hands. There is also a feeling of security and satisfaction in belonging to so old and great a fellowship as the Church affords. It is significant, however, that this doctrine should also have proved itself so well suited to the aims, and perhaps to the unconscious desires, of churchmen. The potentialities which it holds for acquiring

prestige and power are great. It has endowed many with an authority quite out of keeping with their talents or their capacity for leadership; while at the same time it has invested them with special immunities. For centuries the symbol of the Holy Catholic Church could be used to defy the authority of monarchs; and even now it is significant politically in many parts of the world. Protestant ministers also, though lacking the support of an ancient tradition, wield a considerable influence through their slogan of the Church Militant, soon to become the Church Triumphant. The shrine, the altar, the sacred objects and vestments, the rituals, the words of scripture, the music, and even the odors of church worship have become stimuli for conditioning the most profound emotional responses of life. The enduring character of these symbols and the feelings centering about them seem to proceed from an institution which is timeless and universal. The sacraments, solemn ceremonies which are frequently associated with the most crucial events of a human life, have within them a profound possibility for the control of human attitudes.

In Protestant denominations the symbol of The Church is generally put forward as an opportunity for wider service and more consecrated fellowship. Clerical influence is here exerted by the argument that it is through the church that an individual can best realize his desire for living a good life and serving his fellow men. The Church is thus represented as the agency dedicated exclusively to bringing about the Kingdom of God.

O living Church, thine errand speed;  
Fulfill thy task sublime;  
With bread of life earth's hunger feed;  
Redeem the evil time!

This characterization eliminates much of the element of superstitious fear and permits motives to enter which can be regarded as socially useful. It has, however, the disadvantage of a certain narrowness; for there is danger that it may lead to the impression that the activities conducted by ministers in the community are the principal means which God has chosen for the realization of his Kingdom. The attitudes upon social problems displayed by



clerical leaders, no matter how fallible they may be, are therefore endued with a divine sanction which, in the minds of many, gives them greater weight than the policies of the wisest statesman. This theory of social betterment tends to discourage the patient and thorough methods of scientific investigation in favor of a 'revealed' solution. Since God himself, through 'the enlightened conscience of the Church,' is believed to be leading the battle, there seems to be no occasion for gathering facts and reflecting upon all sides of the question. The program to be undertaken is assumed, without question, from the start, because it is believed to proceed not from human knowledge but from divine ordinance. And since the divine authorship of the 'Church's' policy is not questioned, this fiction may cover the bias of the most dogmatic reformer. We may quote the 'voice' of "The Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals of the Methodist Episcopal Church" as articulated through its leader. In his twentieth annual report, after stressing the functions of his committee in upholding 'the Church's' stand upon prohibition, amusements, marriage, movie censorships, juvenile cigarette smoking, and the "general revamping" of morals, this leader continues:

Religion and morals are one. . . . The Church can never escape its responsibility for the moral life of the community. There is no such thing as preaching religion and letting the morals of the community alone. . . . Men may talk tolerance until they become too loose-jointed to stand for a principle. They can teach brotherhood and charity until their mantle will almost cover the supreme enemy. . . .

In the decade to come we expect to keep up the interest in all moral reforms by pumping the facts into the public mind through educational processes in the pulpit, platform, press, home, school, League, Sunday School and Church.

We expect to represent the most aggressive and successful, best-organized and best-manned branch of the Church militant. We shall work out all those plans for moral welfare which the world needs and the providential leadings shall prompt all loyal Methodist Christians to undertake.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Voice*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, January, 1930.

In the hands of leaders of such self-assurance the 'providential leadings' of Methodism, are, I fear, unsafe. Their vision of the Kingdom is too limited, and their capacities too narrowly trained to cope intelligently with the complexities of modern life.

There are, of course, wide differences among clergymen and denominations in the extent to which the ecclesiastical fictions are exploited. Some ministers hold the symbols of The Church, its offices, and its authority, continually before their communicants' eyes; others consciously subordinate institutionalism to the pursuit of a Christian life. We must recognize the fact that many ministers approach their task in self-effacement, and, seeking for themselves neither power nor fame, strive earnestly to embody in their own lives the holiness which they preach. Notwithstanding these facts, church transcendentalism is likely to enter to some degree in the devotions and the practices of a large number. It has become so habitually a part of our thinking that its use is scarcely conscious. No doubt many churchmen assure themselves that the end will justify the means; that through the employment of such symbols the work to which they have dedicated their lives can be more effectively accomplished. It should also be remembered that no living person is responsible for the tradition of the super-mundane Church. Most ministers will probably say, and quite justly, that they have not created, but have only accepted, this image. It is so deeply a part of traditional human thinking that they can do nothing else. All this is true. The notion has indeed been elaborated through the ages; unnumbered priests and worshippers have developed and transmitted it. But the end result, none the less, has been the acceptance of an idea which, whether used for selfish gain or human welfare, has confused the thinking of men and women generally in the same measure that it has redounded to clerical prestige. So long as the Church Transcendent is believed to direct moral progress, ethical thought and feeling must move within the circle of the creeds of churchmen, and men will be neither morally nor intellectually free. Our criticism, therefore, is based not so much upon the lack of good motives among clergymen as upon their failure to face this issue squarely and to liberate the religious impulses of individuals from institutional thinking. The ministers

whom I am criticizing are found wanting not in piety, but in insight and courage.

#### IV

But while the belief in a mystical, supersensuous Church has conferred upon ecclesiastical leaders an unusual power over human attitudes, such control has been of an emotional rather than a rational or socially useful character. When taken out into the world of practical affairs the theory has been a pretentious failure. It is true that certain reformers under the slogan of the Church Militant, have been able to arouse considerable fighting spirit among the faithful for causes which they have considered righteous. It must be remembered, however, that these men have stepped out of the rôles of ministers of churches. Having their own work to do and sensing no direct responsibility for upholding the sacred character of ecclesiastical symbols, they freely wield the name and influence of 'the Church' upon every battlefield, no matter how controversial or how sordid the issue. Their brothers in the pulpits are sometimes embarrassed by these manoeuvres; for theirs is a task of a very different sort. An institution held up as adoring an Unseen Presence veiled to the eyes of mortals, and whose authority is unchanging and absolute, must of necessity be so far removed from worldly concerns that, upon practical issues, its spokesmen can have little to say. Should they attempt to become vocal in public affairs, being human, they would be certain sooner or later to plunge the 'sacred institution' into errors, and hence to endanger its reputation for voicing the wisdom of an omniscient God. Hence in proportion as clergymen rely upon the fiction of the Church Transcendent, they render themselves impotent in attacking the problems which touch men and women most deeply.

Throughout the ages when war was an unquestioned method of settling controversies, the heads of the Church, though they paid frequent lip service to the Christian ideal of peace, carried out no sustained and effective course of action with a view to restraining or punishing all combatants impartially and putting an end to all conflicts of arms. Certain wars in fact were "holy," and special indulgences were given to those who participated.

During the recent world conflict neither Catholic nor Protestant churchmen at large conducted any vigorous and effective campaign for peace without victory. Many of them prayed, instead, for the triumph of the flags of their respective countries. Recent attempts to promote world peace by church influence have been scarcely more successful. A document drafted by the members of the Catholic Association for International Peace, while arguing for greater reasonableness and amity among nations, declared that under certain conditions and for grave reasons war may be justifiable and may become the right of a sovereign authority. Not long ago, the delegates of a Methodist Conference passed the resolution that the Methodist Episcopal Church "should in its corporate capacity refuse to sanction or support any future war." In the very next paragraph, however, the right of an individual was conceded, in the case of a future war, to "follow his own enlightened conscience," that is, to enlist or to remain a pacifist as he might choose. This reservation was indeed necessary, and is one which any one looking at the situation realistically would be compelled to endorse. Nevertheless, does it not betray the fatal weakness of efforts of this character? In the event of another great war, would not the 'enlightened conscience' of the church-goer probably lead him to enroll in the 'cause of his country,' just as it had done before? 'The Church in its corporate capacity' is a grandiloquent fiction. Aside from the offices of clergymen, this phrase can refer explicitly only to the sum total of the concerted religious activities of the communicants. But the communicants, as men and women, have many other pursuits in which they are deeply interested; and this one segment, their church behavior, cannot be taken out of their personalities and considered as acting by itself. Until church members in their private lives want peace and are willing to pay its price, it is nonsense to imagine that they can bring it about, or even aid materially in its consummation, by an edict of the Church. The reputation for virtue and wisdom attaching to the Church as an institution can hold its luster only when it is kept within the heavens. When put to the test upon earth it becomes a mere ecclesiastical gesture, a pious but futile hope.

As this essay was being written, a clergyman, the pastor of

one of the largest churches in my town, conceived the idea of arranging in his church, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Eighteenth Amendment, a debate between a 'wet' and a 'dry' leader upon the merits of the prohibition system. But the plan met with failure almost as soon as it was launched. An important representative of a 'wet' organization, who was invited as one of the speakers, declined. A second official did likewise. The ground which these men advanced for their refusal was that churches were institutions which were too sacred to contaminate by so sordid and 'purely political' a question as the prohibition issue. From their replies, which were published in a local newspaper, the following excerpts are significant.

Believing that no other power for good is so important as the spiritual influence of the churches, I cannot conscientiously join in any movement which tends to degrade by associating either side of the prohibition fight with the religion of Christ.

The question of the wisdom or foolishness of it should not be dragged into a Christian church. Our American churches are already gravely injured by the attempt to turn them into political soap-boxes.

I will not take any part in profaning a church in this way and I hope you will use your own good efforts to save your own church from being turned into a town hall for the discussion of purely political questions.

Perhaps these men, being 'wets,' feared that the atmosphere of a church congregation would not be altogether favorable to their cause. Or it may be they were quite sincere in their reasons for their refusal. In either case their use of church symbolism was effective in putting an end to the plans for the debate.

Many communicants and priests who have a deep reverence or an aesthetic feeling for church practices and institutional religion are ready to forego their use for helping to solve the practical problems of the modern world. Such opposition to the 'lay pulpit' is based upon considerations of reverence and 'good taste.' For the opinion of those who sincerely hold such a view, I have a genuine

respect. It is none the less certain, however, that in so far as the sacred and beautiful symbols of the divine service are being protected from worldly profanation, ministers and worshippers are denying themselves the opportunity of testing their relevance or profiting by their usefulness in the other phases and issues of life. It is quite legitimate for clericals to maintain that their field of ministration deals only with the inner, the spiritual, and the aesthetic needs of their following; but let them then be humble in the rôle they ascribe to the 'Church' as an agent in bringing about God's Kingdom of righteousness in the practical, daily affairs of men. That the divine service may give solace, renewal, elation, or emotional comfort in the subjective experience of the worshipper probably few would deny. But will it equip and lead him to solve the daily problems of his conduct in a more liberal, enlightened, and altruistic fashion? Here the churchmen, so long as they limit their ministrations to the ecclesiastical compartments of their parishioners' lives, have no proved ground for hope.

Fundamentally, the potentiality of institutional religion for good in any community lies not in 'the Church,' but in its ministers and communicants. It was not the Methodist Church, but Francis J. McConnell, who exposed the labor situation in the steel industry at Pittsburgh. And in the absence of men like Mr. McConnell, the heads of steel corporations will have nothing to fear from churches. Fundamentally, also, the conduct of men and women, even as members of religious bodies, is governed not by the spirit or mandate of a divine institution, but by specific human motives. Whether for good or for evil, their actions conform to their personal characters as individuals, while 'the Church' must fit into the pattern of their behavior as best it can. In the acute labor conflicts at Marion, North Carolina, where the families of workmen were in great need, it is reported that the 'churches' took no stand. An investigation disclosed the fact that the personal interests of most of the ministers and church officials lay upon the side of the textile corporations. In another locality, under the pretext of keeping their religious institutions 'pure,' the members of a Chamber of Commerce have fought to prevent the ministers of their churches from allowing radical labor

leaders to speak from their pulpits. Church members, organized as a church corporation, have received rentals from poor people living in tenements which had been allowed to get into a disgraceful condition. As urban church property increases in value some communicants are pulling down their churches and erecting modern 'temples of commerce,' and then re-assigning religious worship to a smaller and more economical space in these new business quarters. The racial prejudice of men, as well as their economic interests, has found expression in the practices of 'the Church.' 'Canonical Law' has prompted an eminent bishop to deny to a minister of another denomination the privilege of officiating in a church within the former's jurisdiction. We are by no means implying that conditions of this sort are the rule in institutionalized religion. They do exist, however, and they are sufficiently numerous to indicate that, although clerical actions may be rationalized in the name of religion, it is not the Church Transcendent, in its inspired wisdom and virtue, which acts, but human beings in all their fallibility and weakness.

We must conclude then that the doctrine of the Church Transcendent is as deceiving in practice as it is illogical in theory. The issues which determine church policies and actions are probably not dictated by divine providence but by human motives. Churchmen who rely upon the transcendental concept are obliged, in that measure, to withdraw from the practical problems of the communities in which they live. In proportion as feelings of universality and sacredness cluster about ecclesiastical symbols, these symbols must be preserved from contact with the world.

## V

What road will religious leaders of the future take? If I might hazard a prediction, I would say that there will come about a change in which ministers and church members will gradually realize that, concerning the grounds of religious faith, no man and no 'institution' can speak with final authority. The Church will no longer be regarded as an institution containing wisdom sufficient to assure us that the deity conceived in its traditional rituals is the One True God, or indeed, that any

such Being exists. We shall only know that within ourselves we feel a groping for some experience and some understanding of the universe which is deeper and more enduring than any we now possess; and that we aspire in our conduct toward the realization of certain ideals. Beyond this we shall confess that we have neither knowledge nor assurance. Just as the opinion of the wisest individual on earth must be regarded as tentative and incomplete, so also must the view of any collection of individuals though such a congregation extend over the surface of the earth and backward through the centuries. Instead of being considered a supernatural agency of higher intelligence and virtue than its members, the church will, in this new conception, be rigorously identified with its living communicants. Their aims will be acknowledged as its aims; their limitations will be its limitations. No doctrine will be permitted to hamper individuals in reflecting upon the implications of their own experience; and the God of the 'church' will be altered as readily as the Gods of individuals.

Although in this change of front the ideology of religious institutions will be fundamentally altered, the practical aims which many are now seeking to realize will be the more encouraged. Church congregations will become more like discussion groups in which an individual will be helped to reconstruct his scale of values through an exchange of experience with his fellows. The purpose in such associations will be not materially different from that in groupings of a civic, scientific, aesthetic, or philanthropic character; namely, the expression of a certain phase of individual personalities. Ethical living and human service in all their ramifications will receive a new impetus through the discovery that excellence cannot be achieved vicariously through one's Church, but only by the efforts of an individual himself. It will be realized that men and women do not acquire good motives through being grouped together as an institution, and that the plea for good works in the name of a duty or loyalty toward the Church is after all a tawdry appeal.

As for the place of ministers in such an imagined scheme of the future, their field will be limited in certain respects, but



considerably widened in others. The authority attaching to ecclesiastical rank and symbols will, of course, disappear. Churchmen will be judged entirely upon the merits of their work and upon their characters as men. With the decline of their office in its institutional aspects there will come an enlarged conception of personal service to be rendered. The ambition of building up a great Church will be subordinated to an interest in helping individual members. If these predictions are sustained by coming events, the pastor of the future must be trained for that type of communication which proceeds not from a high center of institutional authority but from the free give and take in face to face groups. Ministers will need, more than ever, to be students of the entire field of human personality. They must acquire the ability to counsel and to help individuals in finding their own method of living effectively amid the complex and trying requirements of our present civilization. These changes of vocational emphasis cannot fail to have an effect upon the type of men who go into the ministry. The incompetent or insincere person who is seeking the shelter of institutional privilege will no longer find a place. Other-worldliness, as well as opportunism, will be discounted. Although the minister will lose that halo which is associated with an unattainable standard of human perfection, he will gain in becoming a man of this world. His personal ideal will no longer be the Christ, a supernatural deity at the head of a Church, but the lowly man of Galilee, serving and being served by the people among whom he lives.

Already there are signs at hand which are prophetic of such a change. The rapid multiplication of religious denominations and sects reflects the unrest of men and women under the older institutional forms. Church history recounts a long series of such revolts: first, from the universal Catholic Church, thereafter, from the protesting branches, and finally, in many sects, from the formalism of church ritual altogether. Many religious leaders look upon this process with apprehension, regarding it as the sign of weakness, disharmony, and strife. To me it seems a good rather than an evil omen; for it presages a new type of unity far more spontaneous and genuine than any which could

be secured under the old régime. Our present diversity and turmoil are indications of the failure, not merely to find one true and universally satisfying creed, or to establish an all-embracing institution, but of institutionalism itself as a method of religious expression. Can we not look beyond these present conditions to the complete abolishment of denominational differences, not, as some churchmen hope, by the reuniting of all communicants under one creed, but by the abandoning of creeds and denominations altogether? May not the church of the future, if church it can be called, become a situation in which the private faith of each person will have the greatest possible liberty. The leaders of such a church will know no required formula for the realities of another sphere; they will establish no universal God (except as each individual finds within himself an experience answering to such a term); they will employ no symbols for the purpose of mediating between a natural and a supernatural order.

The movement for the consolidation of local churches into a non-sectarian community church, although partly based upon economic or other motives, is a further admission that creeds are of little importance at the present day. A church situation which is an expression of the community life of men and women is truly a communion and comradeship of individuals. The leaders of such an association need claim for it no continuity in time, nor transcendence in mission or prophecy, beyond the lives and accomplishments of its members. There is no need for a creed in such a church other than that of the complete freedom of feeling, thinking, and communication of the experiences of individuals. There are no ultimate values, other than the truth, goodness, or beauty which parishioners and pastor alike are seeking, each according to his own nature and each with equal potentiality for discovery. Many liberal religious leaders are now striving toward objectives of just this sort. Though they are reluctant to proclaim this new ideal boldly and clearly, nevertheless its values are already beginning to be realized. Their efforts would be greatly strengthened if such leaders could bring themselves and their congregations to a frank realization of the end toward which they are working and to a renunciation of in-

stitutionalism in favor of this new goal. Perhaps they cannot do this completely at present because there still linger under the old symbols many entrenched habits and cherished sentiments, and many unseen sources of private advantage. It will not be an easy corner to turn. We can be sure, however, that with the present rapid advances in our thinking, the issue will sooner or later be forced upon us. The 'Kingdom of God' must become identified with the kingdom of men. When that time comes we may go forward to meet the new reformation calmly and without dread. The God of Churches and the Church Transcendent were our primitive attempts to envisage the things which lie beyond our understanding. Whatever the ultimate reality may be, it is unreasonable to fear that we shall give offense if, discarding our earlier conceptions, we try again in the light of a maturer knowledge.

---

---

# XXI

## THE RELIGION OF A SCIENTIST

---

---

EDWARD, AGED FIVE, stood gazing upward at the Ferris wheel as its great rim of cars with their motionless passengers swept, in gigantic silhouette, across the sky. He did not ask his aunt to take him for a ride but seemed lost in wistful meditation. "Auntie," he said at length, "if I was to go up in that Ferris wheel, do you think God would reach down and slap my mouth for swearing?"

This incident will seem to some, no doubt, an evidence of the deep religious conviction of our race. Others may regard it merely as a jocose fantasy of childhood. To me (I am Edward's father) it affords neither pious reflection nor amusement, but a serious question. There has been, I fear, some false teaching somewhere in the child's brief past. But surely modern church schools (and Edward has attended some of the best) no longer present the picture of an irate Jehovah. It seems equally certain that it was not portrayed to him by his various relatives. Yet the fact remains that he has been taught something; and this is what his understanding has made of it. We are careful in our secular education that there shall be impressed upon children only the most authentic masterpieces of art and literature, and the most carefully tested facts of science and practical experience. What perversity makes us crown this fine structure with a mass of superstitions? The fact that we have intended only to make a difficult subject clear to children does not mitigate the evil. Regarding the more practical, but less significant, questions of life we have learned, when confused or ignorant, to keep our silence. Why can we not be silent before children about God?

Many religious persons will pass over this episode with the remark that it is an unusual case, representing an aspect of religious education which we are trying to overcome. Religion, they will say, like anything else, has to be taught; and we cannot shirk

our responsibility merely because the task is difficult. Most ministers assert that there can be no fundamental disagreement between religion and science. I have heard distinguished scientists say the same thing; and somehow I feel it should be so. But in proportion as I have tried to reconcile, intimately and in detail, the findings of scientists with the creeds of churchmen, I have met with difficulty and discouragement. I have begun to suspect that the religion which people refer to as harmonious with science is not any actual faith at present known or practiced. It is religion *as such*, an abstract perfectionism under which is classified everything in life that is worth while. Since science is a noble pursuit, it *cannot*, therefore, be contrary to religion. This argument, a common one among clerics, cuts the ground from beneath one's opponent and leaves him speechless. It is a far cry, however, from religion defined as the ideal to that which is actually formulated and taught; and we shall never get anywhere until this distinction is recognized.

Then too, I suspect that the vigorous assertions that scientists and religionists can have no quarrel, at least none which should be aired, are gestures of convenience proceeding from men in high places. No doubt in avoiding this issue they do so with excellent intentions. Peace-making is a desirable quality, and it entails certain practical advantages for all concerned. The trouble is merely that, remaining as these men do, within the confines of a single field, they do not see what happens to the thinking of those who set out boldly into both. A churchman, who does not venture far enough into the laboratory to find that research means a rejection of revealed authority, readily assimilates the laws of nature into his system as the "will of God." Not understanding the scientific point of view, he sees no conflict. A scientist, engrossed likewise in his own work, is content to let natural laws be so assimilated because he has too little appreciation of the churchman's thinking to realize what this implies. The "will of God," in so far as it is anything more than his generalizations about nature, is, to a pure scientist, not worth bothering about. It is, of course, impossible to quarrel with anything which one does not take seriously. Coming down to essentials, however, we

see that our scientist's understanding of nature is based upon his descriptions of the way in which natural objects behave; to add anything more would spoil the picture. The religious view of nature, as represented by many churchmen is animate, progressive, and fraught with a spiritual purpose. To say that these two notions are in clear and workable harmony is to fly in the face both of logic and of fact.

Alas, then, for a mere layman who, in his modest way, must live a part of his life in each field. When these two points of view are brought sharply together within a single mind their antagonism is felt in all its poignancy. "Science" and "Religion" as institutions seem to be at peace; but the individual is torn with doubt and conflict. Those who cannot live by bread alone will shun authority upon either side and will fight their way toward some honest solution. Many, however, will take the easier course of dividing their world into compartments. In one of these the 'church' and the clergyman with his personal God will reign supreme. In the other, that of technology and practical life, 'science' will be the deity. The compartments of such a life are logic-tight. One can make assertions in one of them which are flatly contradicted in the other. In this sorry condition, in which, though directed in accordance with science in many things, one is in the last analysis troubled by a fear which no science can dispel, any sustained intellectual growth is impossible. One cannot be wholly brave in one's science nor true in one's religion.

## II

Most discussions of this question proceed upon the assumption that our task is to reconcile two great fields of reality known as Science and Religion. The conflict is externalized and regarded as taking place between two bodies of objective and impersonal truth. This, I believe, is a mistake. Both science and religion are orientations toward our experience which arise within ourselves. They represent our personal struggle to conceive the world in two different ways; and beyond our own experiences we have no authority for the validity of the doctrines in either field. Since our experience is continually changing and our horizons widening,

science and religion as systems have, at any moment, only the most ephemeral and precarious existence. The science of today is so different from that of two centuries ago as to be recognizable only in name; and the science of tomorrow will discredit much of the science of today. Religions also are changing, though in a more gradual fashion. Only the inner impulse of those two quests remains. Although no one can say that either the God of religion or the laws of science are at any one moment true, we can affirm that men in all ages have been, and will probably continue to be, both scientific and religious. The realization of this fact will simplify our problem and bring it into sharper focus. Instead of concerning ourselves with the conflict between two abstract and largely erroneous systems of thought, we shall consider only the human urges which inspire the building of such systems, and the possibilities for their complete and harmonious expression.

The occasions upon which we leave the sphere of our bread-and-butter interests and catch for a moment the deeper meanings of life seem to me to reveal three fundamental and distinct forms of experience. These are the scientific, the religious, and the aesthetic. The supermundane ideals to which they correspond, and upon which philosophers have built elaborate systems, are, respectively, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. As to the possibilities, however, of their externalization we are entirely ignorant and unconcerned. We only know (and the knowledge is sufficient for our purpose) that human beings can, and do, approach their experience in these three different ways. Through the scientific approach we deal with events in a disinterested fashion. We are concerned with them only in and for themselves. We seek to discover the parts of which things are composed and the general statements, or "laws" by which we may describe their composition and behavior. The aesthetic attitude is one in which we seek and enjoy in the facts of life a sense of harmony, proportion, and balance, and that delicate precision of form and content which is the delight of the true artist. In the religious approach we deal with the same facts and events but in a different manner. We arrange them in a scale of moral values, we think

of them as right or wrong; and we feel in human living an aspiration from the ignoble to the noble, from baseness to righteousness. (Should someone question whether the religious point of view is anything more than that of ethics, which is based entirely upon our regard for the welfare of others, the point may be granted without affecting our discussion.)

I do not contend that these three attitudes are the only channels through which we can sense the full meaning of life. Other possibilities may be thought of. It does seem clear, however, that they are universal and important. Probably everyone has within him some measure of each; though I will agree that individuals differ widely in this regard, and in the relative emphasis with which the three modes are reflected in their personalities. These forms of experience are, moreover, closely related in certain ways. If each is given free play, uninhibited by the others, they produce a certain poise and harmony and a broadening of one's sympathetic understanding. Henri Poincaré, himself a fine example of this versatile appreciation, has written as follows:

. . . Yet truth should not be feared, for it alone is beautiful.

When I speak here of truth, assuredly I refer first to scientific truth; but I also mean moral truth, of which what we call justice is only one aspect. It may seem that I am misusing words, that I combine thus under the same name two things having nothing in common; that scientific truth, which is demonstrated, can in no way be likened to moral truth, which is felt. And yet I cannot separate them, and whosoever loves the one cannot help loving the other. To find the one, as well as to find the other, it is necessary to free the soul completely from prejudice and from passion; it is necessary to obtain absolute sincerity. These two sorts of truth when discovered give the same joy; each when perceived beams with the same splendor, so that we must see it or close our eyes. Lastly, both attract us and flee from us; they are never fixed: when we think to have reached them, we find that we have still to advance, and he who pursues them is condemned never to know repose.

. . . The Greeks loved the intellectual beauty which hides beneath sensuous beauty, and this intellectual beauty it is which makes intelligence sure and strong.



. . . This disinterested quest of the true for its own beauty is sane also and able to make men better.<sup>1</sup>

When all has been said concerning the kinship of these three aims, there remains, however, an essential difference between them. Poincaré has merely pointed out the likeness of their operation, and the fact that the realization of one is conducive to the realization of the others. They are, nevertheless, fundamentally distinct; and a well-rounded life consists no less in preserving their uniqueness than in harmonizing their differing expressions. No one of them can be adequately described in terms of another, any more than purple can be seen in its true quality by one who is color-blind to red. In the building of a cathedral there is given considerable play to the artistic impulse of the builders; yet in and through the work there runs the deeper theme of aspiration toward God, which molds the aesthetic creation and makes it subservient to the religious. The artist, on the other hand, who paints the nativity or life of Christ feels in his work a certain religious inspiration. But there is something more—that indefinable thing called beauty—without which the Christian story would have no meaning for his art. A scientist, pausing to contemplate the new vista of the universe which his labor has revealed, may look upon it with the wonder of the religious mystic or with an eye for its awe-inspiring beauty. The moment, however, that he assumes such an attitude his approach as a scientist ceases; nor can it be restored until, detaching himself from poetic or religious values, he descends again to a disinterested curiosity about objects within his immediate domain. These three approaches, then, are roads which diverge. We can never get on to one of them by merely following along another. The experiences to which they lead are irreducibly unique. It may be that deep within us they emerge from some common well-spring of our personality; but that source, if it exists, is com-

<sup>1</sup> Poincaré, H., *The Value of Science*, Introduction; *Science and Method*, Book I, Ch. I. Quoted from a collection of Poincaré's works entitled *Foundations of Science*, translated by G. B. Halsted and published by The Science Press, New York, 1913 (pp. 206-6, 366).

pletely hidden from us, and is evidenced only in the living of a full and well-ordered life.

We have now a broader basis from which to discuss the development of a philosophy of living. To be ultimately satisfactory such a philosophy, it seems to me, must give play to each of these three attitudes, the scientific, the religious, and the aesthetic. Each must be realized in such a manner that its expression does not dominate or obscure the expression of the others. Any working conception which fails to accomplish this must, in that measure, deny or frustrate a portion of life. Keeping this criterion before us, what can we say of various attempts to solve, from special points of view, the problems of science and religion? And what promise can be held out for a solution based upon these three tendencies of human nature? Our first concern will be with those who declare that the only true and sufficient guide is to be found in the scientific attitude toward life.

### III

It has been frequently observed that those persons who are the loudest in their claims for an omnipotent science generally have the least understanding of what science is. They forget that our natural laws are not eternal verities, but only temporary resting places, and that true science is self-abnegation and adventure into the unknown. Even more deluded are those who confuse the scientific attitude with its by-products, applied science and modern technology. Following the great luminaries, little known to the public generally, comes a horde of lesser men, bearing dimmer lights. These are the inventors, who place ahead of the desire to know, the zeal to apply, to harness, and to exploit. Most people seem to regard the great scientists as lovers of mankind, motivated by an incessant desire to solve humanity's problems. There is, of course, no denying that most, if not all, great men have their altruistic interests. But to insist, as many do, that without having in the background of their minds the possibility of making the world a better place in which to live, scientists would have no genuine zeal for their work, is to be-

tray a purblindness which shuts out a whole kingdom of the human spirit.

The basic fallacy of science-worshippers is the notion that the laws of natural science are causes of phenomena, or that one event can "cause" another to happen. A scientist does not pretend to know what "makes" phenomena behave as they do, or whether, in fact, anything can make them. This problem is at present insoluble for both religionists and scientists. We can merely observe the manner and sequence in which things do happen, and describe as accurately as possible what we see. Natural laws are, as far as human knowledge goes, merely descriptions of events. To ascribe "forces" to them is not the work of a scientist, but of an engineer, or of some pious, but exultant tyro who believes that God has placed all things under man's feet. I know of no greater presumption than the belief that man has learned to control nature. We have learned merely to place our machines at the crucial points, or crossroads, of natural events—happenings which go on apparently in sublime indifference to human purposes. Any further claim for the power of science is a vain boast, the crowing of a chanticleer. Man's conquest of Nature! Scientists smile at this phrase as they proceed in their laboratories, analyzing, shifting conditions, recording, and thinking, until at last they learn one more secret of that universe of unfathomed beauty, before which our skyscrapers and our locomotives crumble as so much worthless dust. Bankrupt, indeed, is he who, thinking that the world is to be saved through science, invests his claim to happiness in its technological applications. He has sold his faith for a false reward. The science which he espouses is not true science at all, but in comparison with it, dross. He has betrayed not only his ethical feeling but his scientific impulse as well.

But granting that we take the humbler and truer view of men's intellectual achievement, are not the predictions of scientists so successful in all fields that to ignore them for another guide would be sheer folly? Here again the champions of authoritative science overstep the mark. As I sit at my desk two raindrops are coursing down my window. Both cling to the glass, both move in an irregular manner downward, and both come to rest upon

the sill. But how different have been their courses. Each had its own startings and stoppings, its quick runs and periods of arrest, its own zigzag pattern of descent. Hundreds, thousands more raindrops come, and the result is the same. No two are alike in their course. Can the scientific method explain *this*? Let us see.

Certain generalizations come readily to mind concerning the flowing of raindrops. There are the laws of gravitation, inertia, friction, surface tension, and cohesion. But it should be noted that we have here precisely the same laws for every drop. How, then, can the *differences* of their pathways be accounted for? The scientific approach can predict only uniformities in nature; individuality is overlooked. Still, it is only the uniformities, some will say, which really count. This, however, is too narrow a view. If I, myself, were a raindrop, and my existence depended upon reaching the window-sill before being evaporated by the sun, the individual vagaries of my course might seem of profound importance. The same principle may be applied, less fantastically, to human beings. The make-up and career of a personality, no less than of a raindrop, is an apparently fortuitous combination of elements, which, though incapable of being formulated under any natural law, is, nevertheless, of the utmost human significance.

Someone may object that we can explain the raindrop's course quite readily by looking at its history. The eddies of the wind which brought dust particles against the pane, checking the flowing of the drops, were obeying natural laws. Certain natural conditions, also, were present in the factory where the glass was manufactured, giving it irregularities of surface and polish. All can be explained by scientific laws if we study what has gone before. But is this true? To produce a present raindrop's pathway the events of the past, or the laws they illustrate, must have acted as causal forces. It is as though they were human hands, reaching forward in time and molding the occurrences which are now before us. To conceive of natural laws in such a fashion is to destroy their meaning. But even if we were to waive this consideration, we should still be at a loss. We can understand how the dust particles were deposited upon the pane, and how natural conditions in the factory led to imperfections

in the glass. But why did this particular pane, from a certain factory, happen to be in my study window at the time of this very storm, and just following a particular gust of wind, out of millions of possible gusts, which deposited upon the glass certain dust particles, out of millions of possible particles? Any attempt to explain the course of one raindrop by the historical working of natural laws must involve us in an infinite regression, touching ultimately upon every fact in the universe. An explanation as broad as this explains nothing. It shows, perhaps, that nothing happens contrary to natural laws, but it does not explain why, out of a million of things which *might* happen in conformity with these laws, only certain things actually do.

It is in the spheres of the good and the beautiful, where our religious and aesthetic impulses hold sway, that the problem of the unpredictable pattern is seen most clearly. No natural laws can enable us to appreciate the 'good life' as seen by a Stoic, a Christian, a Mohammedan, or a Yogi of India. Each of these patterns of moral feeling, though it may have something in common with others, is unique; and no element can be transferred from one to another without altering its significance. The assertion that codes of ethics are plain common sense, our racial achievement in learning to get along with our fellow men, is true, but it does not cover the ground. Why have we so many differing systems all classifiable as ethical codes? One is no more successful in explaining this through scientific methods than in accounting for the unique pathway of the raindrop. A modern student of human behavior might treat religion as a pure matter of conditioning. Just as the dog in Pavlov's experiment is trained to secrete saliva at the sound of a bell which is rung at the time of his feeding, so the child is trained to react with awe, reverence, or love in the presence of "sacred" words and objects in connection with which these feelings were originally evoked. This account is probably true. The question remains, however, why certain words were originally selected as stimuli for such conditioning rather than others, why certain responses, rather than others, were associated with these words, and why so apparently useless a practice should be perpetuated through unnumbered

generations. The laws of natural science, in other words, state the process or method by which habits are transmitted; they do not explain the particular content of those habits. All habits are probably acquired, physiologically, in about the same manner; why then should there develop a group of "ethical" habits differing in content from other groups?

A moment's consideration should convince anyone that we do not live by science alone. The practical decisions which we have to make every day, dealing, as they do, with personal preference, moral values, and a feeling of proportion, lie entirely outside our scientific interest. One act, from a purely scientific standpoint, is as good as another, provided it involves no misconception of natural laws. Yet we are called upon continually to make a selection in our own conduct and in that of others. When we study the science of child training, we speak in terms of conditioned responses; but when we actually train a child we exhort him to be *good*. Both formulations are useful but for different purposes. One has scientific validity; but the other suggests to the individual a certain definite and useful orientation toward his social world.

The scientific attitude, then, is an important and profoundly interesting approach to the facts of life; but it is not the only approach. We have, in addition, the urges toward those ideals which we call the beautiful and the good. To deny or suppress any one of these attitudes, by exaggerating another, is to go contrary to our natures; or rather it is for one part of our natures to go contrary to another. Of those who over-value the scientific aim, to the defeat of the ethical, many have but the poorest notion of science itself. They confuse the exploits of engineering with true research, and set up man as a demigod in the midst of nature. Some also are blind to individuals and the problem of culture, while substituting for the appreciative phase of life a one-sided intellectual formulation. These are errors, not of the scientific method, but of those who refuse to admit that they view their experience in any other manner. In avoiding the superstitions of too narrow a religion, a science-worshipper falls a victim to a misunderstanding of himself.

## IV

Just as the name of science has been used by persons not fully understanding it to exclude the other values of life, so the term religion harbors many who under-value the aesthetic and scientific approaches. The word religion has retained from our early teaching an almost universal and cherished significance. The beliefs of some persons are admittedly crude and rudimentary; but every human being, even an atheist, is commonly regarded as having a religion of some sort. Now a word which can be stretched from the limits of orthodoxy at one end to those of atheism at the other cannot help but produce a lethargy of thinking. Views having the most violent contrasts can be smuggled in unchallenged, issues obscured, and conflicts left unresolved. Let us, therefore, draw our lines more sharply. Waiving the question of whether everyone has a religion, as dependent entirely upon our definition of the term, we may briefly consider two types of thinking with regard to this problem.

The exponents of the first of these views I shall call the *strict religionists*. For such persons religion is a settled system of beliefs and practice, ramifying both in their every-day conduct and in their conception of man's relation to the cosmos. It is not a tentative search for the best mode of living, but an accomplished fact, the one way to salvation, laid down by the author of the universe from the beginning of time. According to this view the ultimate reality, God, is synonymous with righteousness. To attain salvation, an interest in the world of nature and art, though perhaps helpful, is wholly secondary; we must strive toward *moral* perfection. This scheme limits religion squarely to the expression of the religious impulse. Since God is regarded as a transcendent being, an all-seeing and all-powerful creator whose nature is the good, the search for scientific truth and beauty can be valued only when they are subservient to the quest of goodness. A philosophy which treats all approaches to life as of equal value is here denied. Life is cast strictly in the religious mold. Strict religionism has been the traditional view in the orthodox creed of practically every Christian denomination. It

is taught also, I believe, by the majority of Christian ministers today. A few leaders and congregations have broken away, but they are conspicuous exceptions.

In contrast with strict religionism is the position of those whom I shall call, for want of a better name, *religion-seekers*. This group has arrived at no conception of human conduct which can be logically related to the structure of the universe. Religion, for them, is not an accomplished plan of salvation, but something which they are continually seeking. It is not established truth, but a relative, dynamic affair, wrought out in the course of living and ever changing as life brings deeper insights. A religion-seeker has, to be sure, the same ethical impulse as a strict religionist; but, unlike the latter, he is unwilling to base his system upon that impulse alone. Salvation for him can be accomplished only by obtaining an *equal* satisfaction for his yearnings for the good, the true, and the beautiful. His religion must be a philosophy of life rather than an elaboration of the ethical impulse alone. What this ultimate unity of life may be, if indeed it exists at all, he has at present no inkling. Should it be found, however, it must permit him not only to aspire to it as noble, but to admire it as beautiful, and to investigate it disinterestedly as natural law. Without once altering its nature, he must be able to feel its reality in all three modes of his experience. No conception of God as yet formulated by mankind has fulfilled for him this requirement; and certainly the Hebraic conception as handed down through Christian doctrine from the Old Testament is wholly inadequate. He is, therefore, seeking. And if it may still be said that he has a religion, then his religion consists in this search itself, in a humble, tentative, and inquiring mode of life.

With a religion-seeker scientists, as I understand them, have no conflict; for his entire position rests upon the complete freedom to pursue every mode of our experience, with no one mode given greater claim upon reality than the others. A strict religionist, on the other hand, seems prone to the same errors as worshippers of science. His method, only, is different. For whereas the latter contemptuously deny moral and aesthetic values, the former ac-



cepts art and science, and then destroys their identity by absorbing them into his own scheme. In a valuable article, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, though not clearly a strict religionist himself, betrays this type of thinking. An authentic religious experience occurs, he says, whenever we encounter any goodness, truth, or beauty to which we feel we should give ourselves.<sup>2</sup> Now self-observation tells me that my religious experience is *not* the desire to give myself to truth or beauty, but something *sui generis*. It is the aspiration toward *goodness* alone. If I were to define my scientific interest and my love of beauty as religious experience, and try to feel them as such, I should rule them out almost as effectively as if I denied them altogether. I suspect, therefore, that what Dr. Fosdick is really talking about is not religious *experience* (for we have no experience unifying all three approaches to life), but an unknown "something" behind these diverging streams, for which the religion-seeker is ever groping.

To admit this interpretation will bring us at once to the determining issue of our controversy with strict religionists: What is to become of our notion of the deity? Most of us have advanced beyond the crude superstition of the earlier Old Testament to a view characterized by greater refinement and beauty. Upon the scientific side, however, the qualifications are more difficult to meet. Even the modern picture of God as a Spirit, omnipotent, omnipresent, yet personal and benevolent, will not satisfy one who values the scientific experience. The conception of the universe to which scientists have progressed has little in common with the notion of a personal God ruling in and through the laws of nature. Spirituality, benevolence, force, and power are concepts derived from our observation of ourselves and other human beings. To project these attributes as the basis of an order so vast and baffling that scientists themselves are beginning to despair of its comprehension appears, to some men of science at least, to be both futile and presumptuous.

Strict religionists will doubtless reply that scientists, by their own confession, are unable to solve these ultimate problems. It

---

<sup>2</sup> *Harper's*, March, 1929, p. 427.

is the function of religion, therefore, to assume the task where science must leave it. Hand in hand the two have run their course; but science comes to an end, and beyond its outposts stands faith. Now he who makes this answer, if he makes it sincerely, must be willing to put it to the test. If 'religion' is to be a cohort and not an enemy of 'science,' a religionist must be ready to go patiently with the scientists, step by step, to the borders of our present known universe. Before donning his super-scientific spectacles, he must see intimately what Pasteur, Maxwell, and Einstein have seen. Appreciating their view, he must then build an extension logically and coherently related to the structure they have reared. And a true scientist, on his part, would welcome the whole-souled aid of such a faith. Serving as an extension at the end of his microscope and his telescope, it would reveal the deeper realities of the things before him.

But the achievement of faith applied in this coöperative manner would, it seems to me, be less assuring than if the religionist had never made the journey. He who has looked through a telescope with understanding is never the cocksure man he was before. And the description of the deity which he would give us would probably be nearer to the language of Spinoza or Professor Whitehead than to that of the Christian Bible. Though God might be posited as a receptacle for all the logical possibilities of the universe, scarcely a single positive utterance could be made about him. Most religious leaders of the present era, not having made this journey, would probably not be content with so bare and cold an outline. We must "symbolize" the reality, they would say, in words which are clearer and more vital for human life. Since we cannot know about God directly, let us picture him as an Omnipotent Person, or Spiritual Force, making for progress in the material universe. But these symbols, diverging from the road of scientists, are easy short cuts through a region hidden from their view. Faith is no longer an extension upon our telescopes, but one barrel of a pair of badly adjusted binoculars through which we can gain a quick and rosy view of the universe—if we but close the other eye.

The zeal of strict religionists to usurp the scientific program not only results in untenable conceptions, but offends against the scientific part of human nature. There is no given picture of the

universe which is precious to a scientist; for he is continually revising or discarding his own. Nor does he insist that scientists are the only ones who can discover truth. It is rather the freedom of investigation which is his fundamental interest. Scientists, no less than religionists, have a working faith; and this faith maintains that it is possible patiently to explore farther and farther into nature, and in exploring to enlarge continually our grasp of truth. The ultimate, all-inclusive law a scientist may never reach; and this he does not ask. His faith points only to the validity of his method and his purpose to follow it consistently and sincerely. It is, therefore, only the denial of his method which can cause him genuine concern. And such a denial comes about through one cardinal error, namely, leaping ahead of research and setting up a final picture of the universe in terms satisfying to the emotions but devastating to the search for knowledge. The image of a deity who, though pictured in concrete terms, is regarded as unknowable, is the arch offense against a scientist's dominant interest. Unapproachable by scientists, this holy of holies recedes ever farther as we advance. It is always transcendent and beyond—the goal of faith, but the death-knell of scientific adventure. Immune to research, it is nevertheless draped in the language of our natural world. Transcendentalism is like a scientific pretense which has betrayed its own method; it resembles a primitive nature-legend which, being rejected by scientists, has been smuggled in again under the guise of religion. The words which it comprises are those used in science; but the manner in which they are put together is jargon. There is, as I see it, no escaping this issue. Religionists must look at the cosmos with the searching humility of a scientific inquiry before they invest their deity with the attributes of the scientists' domain. Until we turn this corner, sharp and painful though it be, there will continue a conflict, not merely between 'science' and 'religion' in the abstract, but between two fundamental impulses of human life.

## V

To project a transcendental, monistic God of any positive sort, whether personal and ethical, scientific, or aesthetic, therefore, seems to me to be a denial of one portion of our lives by the

deification of another. From these flights into the empyrean we must return, broken and incomplete, to that universal mystery which lies within ourselves. When we no longer externalize them, our urges toward truth, goodness, and beauty take on a new significance. We see them not as incompatible deities, each claiming the entire allegiance of the human soul, but as divergent yearnings of our nature. Fully to realize the possibilities of a religion in which transcendental elements are effaced, we must give fresh consideration to the rôle of symbols. Words and objects used to suggest realities lying beyond our senses are signposts pointing in two opposite directions. They seem to point, on the one hand, toward some intangible being thought to lie beyond them and to be somehow fused with them. Upon the other hand, they direct us backward to emotional experiences, the source from which symbols arise. And, here, as an enrichment and quickening of the religious and aesthetic feelings, we find their logical and enduring value.

A rose which we perceive in our garden does not seem at all times to be the same object, but varies with the mood of the observer. Through seeing, touching, and smelling, we describe its properties in a scientific manner. Continued observation of this sort will disclose a certain grandeur and beauty. Such beauty, however, is not that of the rose, but of the natural order to which, scientifically considered, the rose belongs. On the other hand, we may love and admire the rose itself rather than the natural laws revealed in its composition and growth. We may enter through it, figuratively, a realm, not of material nature, but of the spirit, and envisage it as manifesting the goodness and beauty of its creator. A moment's thought will show why these two approaches are so different. The flower awakens in us two distinct forms of response: that of seeing, touching, and manipulating on the one side, and that of our emotions upon the other. Now, while both these experiences, the scientific and the aesthetic, are, as far as we know, responses to one and the same object, it seems otherwise to us at the time. The rose of the scientist we can touch, smell, and handle; and our senses themselves afford sufficient evidence of the reality of that which they experience. The rose of the artist and the religious nature-lover, however, cannot be

fully evidenced by the senses alone, for it embraces also our *feeling* about what the senses give us. The *rose* is "out there"; its *beauty* is, as far as we can know, within ourselves, that is, in our way of responding to it. For this feeling, since it is dependent upon our inner organization, we can see no sufficient outer source. Logic, however, seems to demand that there be one, just as there is a cause, in the rose itself, for the scientist's experience. We therefore *project* a world of transcendent causes, or values, which will make our religious and aesthetic responses seem more reasonable and significant; and in this process the object with which we started, the rose, becomes a "symbol" seeming to reveal to us these intangible, spiritual essences beyond. The rose now seems to partake of a divine perfection which it expresses to man. Symbols, therefore, are like eyes of our emotional experience. The reality which they disclose, however, is not a miraculous outer realm, conflicting with the world of nature, but an image projected as by a light from within ourselves.

There are probably those who will declare that this explanation of symbolism would, if accepted, destroy the value of the symbol. A religion, they will say, without a Superior Being of some sort is unthinkable. As regards my own feeling, however (and one's own feeling is the only basis from which anyone can discuss religious experience), I am convinced that this is not true. To me the rose is just as beautiful when it leads me to "feel as though" a beautiful and perfect God exists as when I say there *is* such a God and that he reveals himself to me through the rose. When I say that God is my way of explaining my own desire to do good, I am in no way lessening this desire.

Judging from my own case, I feel that those who can accept symbolism in this manner will be able to retain a rich and poetic religious background while at the same time escaping the pitfalls of transcendentalism. The Bible and the rituals of the Christian churches are to me storehouses of symbolic expression, the legacy of centuries of experimentation in this field. I have only to divest them of their cosmological and authoritarian setting and treat them as the poetry of aspiration. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper would seem to me to lose none of its vitality or beauty

if we were to regard it as a confession to ourselves of bafflement and of failure to live out our ethical impulses amid the conflicts of life. Throwing ourselves open more completely to the feeling of wanting to do good, we allow it, for a time, to permeate and order all our emotions. In this manner our urge toward right living becomes released, and we start life anew refreshed and with a feeling of being made whole again. How could this episode be better pictured than by the allegory of partaking of the very substance of the Perfect Being? William James has interpreted religious conversion as the sudden luminous realization that the thing we have been seeking for a long time is at last accomplished. The impulse struggling within us toward the good has been blocked and thwarted owing to some attitudes we have never squarely faced. Spurred now to greater humility and honesty with ourselves, we gain new insight into the reasons for our dilemma, and the barriers are broken away. Brought suddenly face to face with a tremendous fact we have never before realized, namely, that we want with our whole heart to do good, there is little wonder that this feeling seems a visitation from above, a cleansing through God's Grace, a new heart within us.

That these are valid and precious experiences of men and women few, indeed, would question. But in order to benefit by them it is unnecessary to regard their symbolism as a signpost of the supernatural. We do not need to believe that we are actually "saved" by the merciful act of a personal and righteous God. The state of salvation may be merely that in which our ethical impulses are so potently released that we feel we can best picture it as the act of a Divine Power. The phenomenon we have described is of deep significance to the individual concerned; but who shall be so presumptuous as to think he can fathom it by a symbolic formula, or set the symbol of this formula up as the ruler of the universe? When we wrest the symbol from its context in the language of the heart and place it in the sky, it is in danger of becoming a menace, rather than an aid, to our integrity.

Many will maintain that it is only by this childlike, concrete presentation that we can reach the untrained minds of the masses.

This argument, however, strikes me as being based more upon convenience than upon fact; and in the degree to which our present scientific education progresses, these conceptions will have to be discarded. Unless my son, Edward, shall basically reconsider his notion of God—it will not be enough merely to change it from that of a mouth-slapping ogre to a benevolent Father—the potential scientific interest within him will scarcely reach fulfillment. To teach that the sacred elements are effective not only because of the contrite state of the participant, but through a virtue entering them from on high or transmitted from Christ through the Church, though it may increase the prestige of the cleric, does not, in my opinion, add one iota to the religious value of the sacrament. The same may be said of an evangelist's assurance that in every conversion God looks down and numbers one more sinner among those who are to enter paradise. Such formulas seem to me to be perversions and corruptions of the symbol. Far from enhancing, they diminish its value as an expression of religious life. They turn the universe topsy-turvy, placing in the heavens that which really belongs in human feelings. Instead of a poetic phrasing of our inner aspiration toward the good, God becomes in them a transcendent ruler and protector, a term for ecclesiastical conjuring, for controlling emotions and for strengthening institutional habits.

I like to recall the story told by Robert Louis Stevenson of how, in his travels with a donkey, he once spent a night sleeping in a wood. He felt so refreshed and exuberant upon waking in the morning that, before he departed, he scattered pennies about the spot in grateful payment for his night's lodging. Absurd from an intellectual standpoint, this act meant that, in order really to express his joy from this health-giving contact with nature, it was appropriate to behave as though there were someone to whom his thanks could be returned. This fancy was, however, the pure projection of his emotions—and as such he accepted it. Superstitiously to have injected a proprietary deity into the scene would have ruined its spontaneous charm, and would have stifled gratitude under the cloak of obligation. Just so, it seems to me, we should regard that 'power' which "lets no

sparrow fall" without its notice. Providence should not be thought of as a Being operating through nature in ways, now kind, now unaccountably malignant. It is a symbol which we use for bringing our feelings into accord with natural laws, an expression of the joy of healthful living when that joy is ours, or of quiet resignation in adversity. It is an experience of the fellowship of a human being with nature, of which he is an inseparable part.

Many of the pitfalls of symbolism can be avoided if we but recognize the dual character of language. Words, for the scientist, must be exact descriptions of events; to the poet and the religious leader, however, they are stimuli for arousing feelings in their auditors. The latter, therefore, seek in language not exactness, but artistry. Their goal is that of helping the individual to achieve religious and aesthetic self-expression; and the manner in which they talk about their symbols must not be mistaken for statements of sensuous realities. Scientists as a rule are sensitive to the dangers besetting such a confusion. For this reason the unrestrained phraseology of strict religionists often disturbs and offends them. This does not mean that they are lacking in the religious or the aesthetic attitude, but that the symbols of art and religion must, for their use, be purged of scientific connotations. A fine portrait of such a character is presented in Mr. Sinclair Lewis' novel, *Arrowsmith*. The austere old scientist, Gottlieb, is portrayed, remarkably enough, as a man of prayer, but the prayers he uttered were couched in language intelligible to no man. I venture that they were a quiet inner ordering of the deeper impulses of his nature, which, during the day's cross-purposes, had become choked and thwarted in their expression. To speak out that which must be felt can never give a true appreciation of the feeling, but only a distortion. Formulating religion in words is not religion, but theology; just as the discussion of the beautiful is aesthetic criticism, but not art. The good and the beautiful, to be truly known, cannot be talked about: they must be experienced directly as modes of living.

It is in this scheme of things that the religion I am seeking must fit. Those symbols which help to focalize my impulses toward good and beautiful living I will gladly employ. But I will use them



for what they are. However valid they may appear as guides of my own feeling, I will place upon them no unwarranted cosmic preëminence. Unless they fulfill the scientific approach they can never occupy in my life the place reserved for the investigation of the natural world. What is beyond the symbol—if anything is beyond it—I may never know. I only know that upon this side, and given formulation through the symbol, lie the strivings and urges of my nature. Our emotional experiences give us necromancy when through them we try to view the stars; but they reveal, if we can but interpret their symbols, a true revelation of that which is within ourselves. Much, indeed, does such a religion leave to be explained. Many will doubt whether it can be called a religion. But though less articulate and final than the doctrine usually taught in churches, it is more satisfying to me; for it affords me a broader appreciation of what life means.

## VI

At this point some strict religionist will be likely to raise a twofold objection. He will say first that, far from simplifying the problem, I have built up compartments in the human soul, where there should be a singleness of purpose. Second, the unity which he sees in life, he will affirm, is precisely what he means by religion. To this I reply that I myself have established no divisions, but have only tried to recognize those which are actually there. I have merely described my own experience in a direct and immediate fashion. On the other hand, if we fail to appreciate this *inner* diversity for what it is worth, we shall be deluded into setting up false partitions in the world about us. In facing any given event we shall then lose the liberty of choosing whether we shall view it in a religious, an aesthetic, or a scientific manner. Our religion will be reserved for the churches and our science for the laboratory and the material concerns of the day. This is compartmentalism indeed! The separate approaches, however, when recognized within ourselves, are not logic-tight, but transparent. No one of them can bottle up the facts of life so that they cannot be illuminated by the others. They are like glasses through which we can look, and which we can change at will, permitting

the events we see to assume the greatest variety and richness of meaning.

And what can be said of those who assert that "revealed" religion leaps all barriers, and pervades and unifies the whole of life? Merely this, that they are probably self-deceived. Such a view may seem reasonable to them, because, in their own lives, the scientific and aesthetic values have been woven unobtrusively into a pattern which is essentially *religious*. What they regard as the "wholeness" of life is really an exceptional aspiration toward the good. Admirably fitted to religious workers, such a conception is deficient in elements which are vital to others. For this reason strict religionists, though highly social in their desire to do good, often appear unsocial in the narrowness of their sympathies.

I think the most profoundly religious experience of my life was when the idea struck me, not long ago, that Jesus was a minister. Most people probably do not think of God as religious: to do so might seem both a sacrilege and a paradox. And throughout my early years of meticulous training I had somehow carried the notion that Christ, being a God who had assumed human form in order to show people how he wanted them to act, was of course perfect and, therefore, in need of no religious impulse. His nature was not an aspiration toward the good; it was goodness itself. A feeling of estrangement had therefore grown up within me toward a Being who was so totally different from myself that he seemed to belong in another world. But that was not all. As I grew old enough to feel an urge toward the exploration of the world about me, other dogmas of deification, such as the virgin birth, the miracles, and the atonement, became so repelling, scientifically and aesthetically, that with one sweep I tried to put the whole of Christianity out of my life forever. Not only the supernatural dogmas, but the ethical side of Jesus' teaching, I felt, had to go. I had not reckoned, however, with my own nature: I still wanted to live a good life. Yet I could not admit this fact to myself; for to have done so would have been to become a Christian, the slogan of an intolerable slavery of the spirit. The inner conflict to which I was subjected was in-

tense. But now all this was changed by a burst of illumination which not only dispelled the fog of orthodoxy, but gave me insight into myself as well. I realized that it was possible to regard Jesus as endowed with a religious impulse similar in kind, though not in degree, to my own. I saw him as a man who, following an urge as old as the race itself, was trying to do good and to encourage others to do likewise. He was not righteousness itself, but a minister of old time who had a genius for showing people the goodness in their own lives. By removing from the symbol of Jesus all traces of transcendentalism the offense against my scientific and aesthetic values was thus erased; and when this was done, the impulse toward ethical living for which Jesus stood, no longer combated by the rest of my nature, was given a sudden and complete release. I found the historical picture of him to be like myself instead of totally different. I went back and re-read many of the words attributed to him with a new awareness of their meaning, and with a sense that these words were expressing something which, in myself, had long been seeking utterance.

This experience is, of course, a personal one. Yet I cannot help thinking that something like it is occurring to many young people today. In so far as this is so, the situation is a challenge to ministers of institutional religion. They ought, in any case, to look closely to their assumption that the religion they are preaching expresses and unifies the whole of life. It is not that I question their sincerity, but only that they have become so engrossed in their own vision of the world as a moral situation that they overlook the existence of other yearnings which are demanding an equal fulfillment. Had they been universally aware of these yearnings, it would have been impossible for some of them to have set up symbols of a transcendent order which, however satisfying to themselves, would become the graven images of idolatry to others.

The issue when rightly seen cuts deeply. The trouble which beset my own religious training was not merely that I had been taught the wrong kind of religion, but that any religion known to man would have been too narrow for the rôle in my life which such teaching was made to play. If the quests of the true, the

beautiful, and the good are irreducibly unique in our own lives, and there is no way of experiencing their unity, how much less can we conceive of a God who embraces and solves this mystery within himself. And if it be objected that that is just what God is—a mystery—we should reply that we ought humbly to regard him as such. Few religionists, I think, would maintain that in a representative church service God is spoken of as an Unknowable Something whose salvation for humankind is quite as fully realized by the pursuit of science and art as through faith and the pursuit of righteousness. If this were so, transcendentalism, the apotheosizing of the moral segment of our natures alone, would be impossible. To claim that any religion yet discovered, or any God yet conceived, really ministers to the whole of life seems to me to be purely gratuitous. It is lip service, not the experience of a well-rounded life. Strict religionists who make such a claim would stretch the moral part of human nature over the other portions in such a way as to imbibe their prestige without allowing them independent expression. Their vision is myopic, their frame too small to fit the picture.

If the personal view which is here expressed should be found to have a fairly general application, we should face, it seems to me, the necessity of a reconstruction of institutional religious practice. Religious leaders would either have to declare the old transcendentalism to be purely the language of emotionalism, or abandon it altogether. The names and objects now held sacred, though still loved, would no longer be set in the firmament. They would remain as media for the expression of our religious feelings, not as idols toward which such feelings were due. They would serve us intimately in the release and ordering of our impulses and the resolution of our inner conflicts. To realize this service it would be necessary only to admit that institutional religious performance ministers to a part of life and not the whole, and that, being a work of human symbolism, its participants and its ministers share our common ignorance regarding the existence and nature of God. Can religious leaders find within themselves this measure of humility?

As for those who must launch out in quest of new adventure, I

would gladly join their company. The old distinctions of good and evil, matter and spirit, God and man, we would now approach at a more basic level. Both poles—men's aspiration and the symbolized God toward whom men aspire—are swallowed up into a larger unknown. Transcendentalism collapses, dissolves, and disappears in the sea of our self-effacement before a profounder mystery; while theology appears as but a paltry allegory, a clearly outlined but specious legend, running its course upon the sands of time. Into this plural mystery, embracing not only the universe but those unique strands of life we call ourselves, it may be that we shall never look. For religion-seekers this ultimate principle (though there may be more than one) is within or behind the universe, not outside and above it. It is comprised not in a transcendent Being who pulls the world his way, but in the distinct, unfathomed strivings within ourselves. It is a moving, not an unmoved, mover. It is not perfect but dynamic; not ruling the universe, yet expressing it to us as diverse forms of our own experience. In a poetic figure, suggested by the conception of Mr. H. G. Wells, it is a still small voice, and yet an unseen king.

To forsake, for such a prospect, the assurance of an established faith requires sincerity, humility, and courage. To many the religion of this new quest must seem an inarticulate and truncated affair. It affords neither solace nor the warmth of personal devotion; and he who pursues it is condemned never to know repose. Still, it does permit us to be honest with ourselves, to retain a sense of proportion, and to preserve a habit of detached and humble inquiry. Though we may be destined never to reach the goal, I believe that we shall have added to the zest of the adventure the satisfaction which is derived from the fullest and richest experience that life can hold. What more has any religion to offer?

## **CONCLUSION**



---

---

## XXII

### INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR AND THE HOPE OF A NEW INDIVIDUALISM

---

---

AND SO WE COME to a pause in our reflection upon institutional behavior. Our survey has been admittedly hasty and incomplete. We have gained only a glimpse of a territory which, though taken for granted by every traveller, has been all too seldom explored. But if, instead of the old complacency, a certain restless curiosity shall have been awakened, if the reader's attention shall have been called away, for a period, from the achievements of his institutions to the nature of institutions themselves, the purpose of these essays will have been attained.

Institutions, as many have said, are tools for 'building civilization'; but they do not, like most tools, lie wholly outside and apart from the individuals who use them. They are, on the contrary, our own habits which, entering into our vital organization, exert upon other phases of our personalities an effect which we cannot safely ignore. Institutions are not merely our instruments; they are a part of ourselves. But unfortunately they do not always, either in their functioning or in their development, grow naturally out of our lives as human beings. They cut across our lives. They are a cross-section of the behaviors of many individuals, all directed, under leadership, toward some common end. And it is this impersonal or 'societal' objective which is intended by our leaders to redound indirectly to the welfare of the persons concerned. This collection of segmental habits, which we call the institution, is something we envisage as belonging more properly to Society than to particular individuals. But Society, if conceived as a being like a human organism, is a fiction. We, as individuals, are the organisms; institutional habits are really a part of *us*. And like all our other habits and dispositions, they must be made to harmonize not merely with the pattern of society, but with *our own characters*



*as individuals.* If such a personal integration is not accomplished, no matter how expertly the 'societal' pattern is conceived, our institutional habits (that is, our 'institutions') will lead eventually to our ruin. When institutional habits are in us, but not of us, the judgment of individuals upon their institutions must be one of failure and bitter reproach. Such a condition of affairs I believe exists today. And this is the reason why the view which I have described, as seen from the unfamiliar rather than the traditional perspective, must seem so dark and forbidding.

Let it not be imagined, therefore, that my appraisal is intended to stand by itself as the final verdict regarding institutions. It must be tempered and balanced by the accounts of those who have followed the other pathway and have shown what men have been able to accomplish in building their civilization through organized, institutional effort. The case is not so simple that it can be covered by any sweeping formula of praise or blame; a more discriminating treatment is necessary. Any fair observer must concede the benefits which institutional methods in the past have brought to human beings. Originating at a time when men, living in comparative isolation, were powerless against wild beasts and the more savage hordes of their fellows, when they had scant protection against the numerous dangers and diseases of their primitive surroundings, these forms of coöperative organization have rendered life more steady and secure, and have permitted the gradual rise of civilization. Biological needs have been rendered capable of satisfaction without recourse to a merciless struggle, filled with bitter toil and the harassment of constant dangers and fears. The history of the physical adaptation of mankind which institutional organization has made possible is a triumph which will probably never be effaced.

It is therefore to be regarded as no denial of history and no deprecation of past benefits that I have turned aside from the usual course, that I have ignored the illustrious picture of men who are building their civilization through institutions, and have ventured to ask what is happening, in this process, to men themselves. The fact that institutional coöperation has solved many of our problems in the past does not prove that it is an

unqualified blessing to the race, or that it may not some day survive its usefulness as a method of human living. And it is not by way of ignoring the achievements of the past that we inquire whether, in our institutions of today, we may not be facing just such a point of diminishing returns. Having built a vast machine, composed not only of physical materials but of human habits, shall we not pause to observe toward what end this structure is operating? Or must we go on building it, and building ourselves into it, until we are compelled to live our lives as parts of the machine itself? Shall we always be like the miser who works and hoards for years that he may later enjoy limitless comfort and power? Or shall we begin now, even while certain problems remain unsolved, to free ourselves for a liberal and spontaneous participation in what life has to offer.

Through their machinery and organization men have almost conquered their material environment. Living in a vast scheme of coöperative interdependence, they have undertaken great enterprises for common welfare. They have increased their strength by national allegiance; they have built enormous cities and devised amazing means of travel and communication. And they have set controls over the unusual and the anti-social individuals, forcing them to coöperate toward these common objectives. But in so doing have men not sacrificed something of their original independence? In gaining power collectively, have they not lost much of their ability to satisfy their wants, as individuals, in direct contact with the things of nature? Have they not limited their movements to prescribed channels and discouraged those differences among individuals whose development engenders personality in many lives? We move about with marvelous rapidity and ease; but there are continually fewer unique and truly interesting places to go, and only spectacular things to see. We read the news collected almost instantly by cable, telegraph, and radio from all parts of the world; but it is, on the whole, stereotyped news from institutional spokesmen about institutions; there is little said directly that is worth reading about human beings. We communicate with great facility with people in all parts of the world; but there is continually less of an

intimate and vital sort about which we can communicate. Cities are becoming vast aggregates of people who live and work in close proximity, yet who seldom really meet. Communities in which we can meet and know our fellows are disappearing. The loneliness of the pioneer, who may travel for days beyond the sight or sound of habitations, is scarcely greater, and is far less inhuman than that of the apartment dweller with human beings pressing in on him from every side and with facilities at his elbow for speaking with almost every person in the civilized world.

In the political sphere, institutional behavior, instead of assuring the self-government of peoples, has shifted the control of affairs to the few who speak as 'mouth-pieces of the institutions.' Instead of direct political self-expression we have heads of commissions and bureaus, advocates of platforms, chairmen of parties, committees, and conventions; we have spokesmen of special interests, 'lobbyists,' and 'pressure propagandists,' all clamoring for the opportunity to control their countrymen according to their own special theories or their concealed and vested interests. Indifference of citizens, lack of civic initiative, graft, racketeering, and other crimes are, in part at least, the result of the separation of government, through institutional behavior, from the individuals governed. Reverence for institutions has been used as a slogan, concealing the immunity of certain individuals for promoting their private interests, venting their prejudices, and strengthening their control over their fellow men. Our habits of national sovereignty and nationalistic organization, falsely regarded as necessary for internal order and economic security, have produced, in international warfare, one of the direst perils of modern times.

Although our industrial and business practices have, through institutionalism, increased the world's wealth almost beyond the power of imagination, they have imperilled the lives and health of individuals in new ways, and have brought dangers more subtle and wearing than those of primitive methods of production. In prosperity we have higher wages, and many partake daily of comforts of living which, at an earlier day, would have been regarded as luxuries. On the other hand, workers are in continually

greater danger of losing their employment and their livelihood altogether. The greater the acceleration given to business, the deeper are the unrest and insecurity of those who conduct it. In proportion as our machines and industrial activities have become more profitable, they have become increasingly uninteresting for those who work. There have occurred a testing and sifting of abilities so as to select and reward mainly those individuals who fit into the economic pattern. Institutional coöperation bids fair to achieve an abundance of leisure time which should be enjoyed by all; but far from showing us how to use this leisure, it has rendered this phase of the problem more difficult than it was before.

Few of the human realities which accompany our institutional habits are more poignant than the progressive disruption of family life and the decline of wholesome contacts between parents and children. Here as elsewhere, we have uprooted human beings from the face to face contacts of the community living, and have scattered them amid a diversity of group and institutional relationships. Such groupings, though heralded by some as successful substitutes for families, have failed dismally in the most elementary functions of family life, the development of harmonious, integrated, and consistent characters in the citizens of today and tomorrow. We have shown great respect for the 'institutions' ministering to 'family welfare' in our communities; but we have given all too little attention to individuals themselves in their familial relationships. We have not searched the potentialities of our young people to find those seeds of change from whose discovery we can help them to come safely into their own. Under the pretext of adjusting the individual to society and its institutions, we either stamp in the controls of a dead past upon their lives, or drive them to a revolt in which they set out upon their perilous adventure without a guide. Even husbands and wives no longer face each other as whole personalities. Institutional habits and viewpoints, stereotyped through prejudices regarding sex differences, have segregated them from a full sharing of each other's experiences. To what end are all our subsidizing of aids to 'family welfare' and all our opportunities for leisure development of young and old if the individuals within families

are to lose one another, if family living itself is to cease?

The institutionalizing of effort through which we have gained our marvelous adaptation to physical nature has profoundly affected our ethical standards and our values. Here again, we have deprived individuals of the full meaning of the experience concerned, and have projected much of that meaning upon society. Such a displacement, while it secures the appearance of a stable, moral society, really diminishes the responsibility of individuals for upholding the virtues they have cherished. Honesty, charity, devotion, and the pursuit of knowledge tend to become prized more as characteristics of our institutions than as the compelling motives of men and women. In place of universal altruism, extending to all mankind, we have patriotism and the nationalistic loyalty to 'sovereign states.' Self-sacrifice and heroism may become out of date because no longer effective in a world which is run through the impersonal mechanism of our institutional habits. Our benevolences are increasingly effected not as individuals, but through a corporate organization. Justice is done while no one seems to do it; injustices and cruelties are also inflicted in such a corporate manner that no individual can be held truly responsible. The current fiction that business is service tends to divert our altruism, our loyalties, and even our science and philosophy through economic channels, with the result that such ends are becoming less frequently pursued, in a disinterested fashion, for themselves. Our values cannot be tried in the fire of a complete human experience in which an individual, through his own personality, rather than through his rôle in some institution, becomes the final arbiter and judge.

Education, that activity through which standards are acquired and interests developed, is likewise tending to become a process of institutionalizing human behavior. In this age when schools and colleges are abundant, when enrollments and endowments are increasing with giant strides, we find the same inevitable sacrifice of individuals to institutional ends. The free interchange of experiences between teachers and pupils, and the immediacy of the students' contact with the world about them, are giving place to the measuring, selecting, and training of individuals for their special places in the social and economic scheme. The values

taught are often those which are considered as given by society and its institutions. Through a failure to grasp its meaning there is frequently closed to the student the book of the natural world, a record which existed long before men's institutions came into being and will probably remain long after they will have passed away. Our only substitute for an intimacy with such a world may become a smug sophistication. We are encouraging the illusion that our mechanical inventions, that certain man-made systems of organization and the fictions by which they are supported, are the beginning and the end of wisdom, the meaning of life itself.

And finally, our subservience to institutional thinking and acting has affected our efforts to adjust ourselves to the unsolved mysteries of life. The rendering of public devotions impressive, the building of churches and church schools, the establishing of denominational foundations, and the launching of 'church' campaigns for a more righteous order have not always been proofs of a proportionate development in the righteousness of individuals. The prestige and leadership of churchmen in the name of the 'Kingdom' have been no sure evidence of that change of character in individuals by which alone the 'Kingdom' can be brought to pass. Through the magic of the word religion, many churchmen have sought to gather under the cloak of their office and their institution the promulgation of all the human values. But by trying to compress them all into the mold of the religious experience, genuine as that experience may be, the significance of these values for life has been correspondingly diminished. Though admitting a merit possessed by beautiful churches and by the services of communal worship, though acknowledging the public-spirited efforts and good works of many clergymen and communicants, we may justly fear as a result of our present church institutionalism, a serious loss in religion as a personal experience of individuals. Church membership, creed, ritual, and sheltering prestige of priests and symbols have often anticipated the adventurous inquiry of an individual into the mysteries of his existence. They have given him, in advance of his own searching, an answer which has been more satisfying to his reverence for symbols than to the needs and questionings of his own experience.

The trends which we have here reviewed are those based mainly upon the primary factors of institutional behavior; that is, they result from the common and reciprocal activities of individuals co-operating in institutional relationships. They reflect the conflict which such habits produce in the lives of individuals as personalities seeking a complete and harmonious fulfillment. But in addition to this primary process, and through it, there runs an implicit secondary assumption that institutions are outwardly established facts, that they are powerful, though intangible, agencies which somehow direct the lives of individuals. Institutions tend to become accepted as explicitly encountered objects of the natural order. This assumption is naïve rather than deliberate, emotional rather than intellectual. Although it is not absolutely necessary to the functioning of institutional habits themselves, it has shown itself likely to creep into the process at almost any point. And by so doing it has reinforced the efforts of those who seek to exploit institutional behavior for their personal satisfaction or their private gain. This metaphor of the institution as a superhuman agency tends to pass over from mere convenience of usage to a literal and emotional acceptance. It is taken from the sphere of the mystical and placed, conceptually, in the practical world where human interests are at stake. Because of such personification, acts and qualities are ascribed to institutions in a way which is peculiarly misleading. Conceiving of institutions as lifted above human heads, yet endowing them paradoxically with human attributes, has made it possible to conceal the use of institutional behavior in satisfying personal ambition, cruelty, sloth, and greed. Nor is such concealment always a deliberate and conscious affair. Institutional fallacies have become so much a part of our thinking, and symbol-worship is so deeply rooted in our emotional habits, that we often delude ourselves. Exalted by a vicarious feeling of self-righteousness, we miss, in the contemplation of our 'institutions,' the true appraisal of our own motives.

When an individual allows his 'institutions' to do his thinking for him, it follows that the thinking is not done. Or worse: the man who entrusts himself to the guidance of his 'infallible institu-

tions' is in grave danger of being led by the nose by men who have sufficient cleverness and duplicity to exploit him. As for genuine research into social processes and their conditions, little can be expected under the handicap of institutional fictions. If 'Government,' 'Business,' or the 'Church,' rather than individuals, are believed to function in the control and guidance of human affairs, investigation of these controls becomes impossible; for entities such as these do not manifest themselves to human senses. Such fictions not only undermine the responsibility of leaders and officials; they render our institutional habits themselves less amenable to change and improvement. We tend to regard these habits not merely as convenient, but as sacred and unalterable. In this way our own lives are fettered; and we bequeath to our children, and to succeeding generations, not merely our knowledge, but our superstition and folly as well.

## II

But before allowing these charges to weigh too heavily in our final appraisal of institutional behavior, we must consider certain arguments which are sometimes marshalled in its defense. We have already noted the increased protection, convenience, comfort, and power over material objects which institutional organization has, in the past, made possible. But along with these assets there must also be weighed certain other alleged benefits of a general or special character.

The first of these considerations is the claim that our major institutions are *highly perfected, rational patterns of living*. They are systems which men have evolved through long ages of trial and experimentation in living and working together. They are not mere chance discoveries, but an intricate and careful product of 'group thinking.' While they are in need of continual change, they are, nevertheless, the best patterns of social conduct which men have been able to devise; and they have so long stood the test of time that they should not lightly be given up. Exponents of this view are likely to use the following analogy. The pattern of parts which makes up a modern watch or an automobile, they will point out, has required for its perfection an enormous amount



of human ingenuity and thinking over a long period of time. It would be a genuine loss to the race if patterns of this sort were suddenly to be obliterated from human knowledge and record. How much greater would be the loss should the patterns of our institutions be discarded.

To this argument I would reply that any plan of behavior is of practical value only in so far as it is useful for human beings living in the present. The test of the merit of a pattern is not the amount of planning or thinking which has gone into it, but the question, merely, of how it works today. We must remember that institutional behaviors have undergone continual and often drastic changes from their earliest beginnings; and this may indicate that the prime factor in their development has not been ages of human thinking about a constant social situation (for in that case the perfect institution would probably long ago have been achieved), but the emergence of *new* and *different* situations which required men to learn quickly to readjust their pattern. The pattern of parts entering into an automobile, or even into a watch, is no sacred matter, as almost any manufacturer will attest. If human circumstances so alter as to make aerial travel as secure and easy as terrestrial, the 'automobile pattern' will speedily decline in its relative importance to men.

The notion of a pattern, moreover, *suggests some end* beyond the mere working of the parts themselves. Many of our present institutional relationships, for example, seem to be directed toward the goal which we call 'progress.' They betray an unrest, a desire for a continually greater conquest over our environment, an urge for mass production, for commercial prestige, and for power and display. This charge, of course, cannot be made for certain institutional practices like the 'Common Law,' which, belonging almost in the category of customs, are typical of a more stable and less 'progressive' social order. But in the more highly organized institutional relationships, such as complicated modern industries and governments, the ideology of progress is clearly manifest. Now granted that we accept such a goal as desirable or inevitable, the institutional patterns which we have today seem admirable devices for taking

us in that direction. But is the direction itself a good one? Is the end in view one which we would be willing to accept as the goal of our lives as individuals? If our institutional scheme is a means of satisfying not the needs and interests of personalities as wholes, but a philosophy of social progress based upon a particular segment of human interest, then the value of the pattern can be no greater than the value of that particular philosophy.

The analogy of the watch or the automobile as a pattern to be preserved does not apply accurately to the patterning of society. In a watch, for example, the purpose which the pattern was invented to serve, namely, the telling of time, lies apart from the mechanism itself. It is the purpose, not of the watch, but of the human beings who have devised such a pattern and who use the devices made in accordance with it. It would be absurd to suppose that the *raison d'être* of the watch lies in the needs or wishes of the parts of which it is composed. Yet such is precisely the case with the institutional pattern of society. The purposes to be served by this pattern lie in the parts, that is, the individuals themselves. The provision for their welfare is the test which the pattern must meet. Failing this test, it must be speedily altered or discarded. The continual relevance of this pattern for the *individuals* whose behavior it comprises, rather than its operation for itself or for some 'societal' purpose, its antiquity, or the effort spent in its construction, must be our final criterion of its value.

Another argument of the defenders of institutionalism is based upon the consideration of *morale*. It is asserted that men, generally speaking, will not work as well for social ends when working as separate individuals as they will when organized. Institutional coöperation supplies an added drive, an enthusiasm, and a loyalty of its own. Individuals organized, it is further argued, work best together when they feel and think in terms of their group or institution as a whole. Use may therefore legitimately be made of collective symbols and fictions for enlisting their support where some meritorious social objective is

in view. The sanctity of the Law, the noble ideals of one's Country, one's Flag, one's Church, and one's fraternity are symbolic incentives toward right living without which one may be in continual danger of slipping back into isolation and indifference.

There is undoubtedly some truth in this argument. Many individuals seem habitually to think of themselves in their rôle in institutions rather than in terms of their solitary performance. Participation with others towards a common end seems, for such persons, to enhance the value of that end. The participants feel that they are lifted out of themselves and carried along by the common ideal in which their personalities are merged. And to many this seems a more satisfying and ennobling experience than that of solitary striving, however earnest such striving may be.

Every fiction, however, has its price. We must be continually on our guard that these transcendently conceived institutions shall be considered as the ends of our efforts, and never as the means. If they become accepted as the latter, we ourselves, who are the real actors, retire from the scene. We then accept our game of inspirational make-believe as a substitute for reality. To attain their full value our ideals should be immediate rather than remote. It is true that appealing to individuals in the name of virtues ascribed to their institutions strengthens the power of institutional leaders in enlisting coöperation for worthy causes. This coöperation, however, is often as likely to be diverted into cruel or unjust actions as into the channels of human welfare. The institutionalized, patriotic fervor of our citizens in time of war affords an excellent example. We have yet to witness an instance in which the morale inspired 'in defense of the Nation' has been successfully employed upon a large scale for peace or redirected into the disinterested service of humanity.

Furthermore it cannot be said that appealing to individuals to be virtuous in the name of their institutions is always a great success. And where the support of the individuals is not forthcoming for a particular law, the institutional symbol of 'The Law' as an entity claiming the loyalty of all good citizens, is in danger of falling into disrepute. On the whole it is probably better to give people the facts about the operation, use, and general acceptance of a *particular* law, and to base the claim to

obedience entirely upon these facts and the value of this law to individuals, than to invoke the sanctity of The Law as such. It is notorious that many criminals and outlaws also personify institutions. The Law to them is a kind of superhuman enemy, or monster whom they seek to escape or outwit. It is only when we treat institutions as persons, or as entities divorced from individuals, that we come to feel toward them either a childish worship or a sweeping and unreasoning hatred. A more discriminating philosophy of institutions would be likely to characterize more thoughtful and discriminating citizens.

Let us turn to the question of morals in organized civic campaigns and charities. While conceding the efficiency of such methods for the ends their leaders seek to accomplish, we may ask whether it might not be better if the needed benevolence could be more directly evoked in givers by actual contact with those who are in need. If benefactors could help in a personal rather than an institutional fashion, more of the spirit of true charity might pervade the scene, and less of the mere *esprit de corps* of giving. In the absence of institutionalized morale, campaigns for boosting 'your city,' 'your team,' or 'your church,' or for 'going over the top with your quota' might be less frequent and less remunerative; but the objectives accomplished might represent a truer conviction and a more sincere feeling upon the part of those who give. If it be objected that in the crises by which we are faced in modern society organized charity is absolutely indispensable to prevent widespread suffering, the point may be conceded without at the same time admitting it as an argument for institutionalism. For it should be remembered that if it were not for the effect of our institutionalism in other spheres (economic production, for example) in which individuals are subordinated hopelessly to corporate organization, such extensive organization of our charities would not be needed. Having lost our personal touch with individuals through our institutional, segmentalized habits, we must organize new institutional habits in order to find them.

Related to the preceding argument is the contention that institutional behavior, and its accompanying sentiments, are

*satisfying to our sense of the beautiful.* To this I agree. The aesthetic value of the ceremonies and symbols connected with institutional formalities cannot be denied. In church ritual, in ceremonies of initiation, in inaugural services, parades and ceremonies centering about the flag, in the dedication of public works and the coronation of rulers temporal and spiritual, there are impressive beauties of sight and sound mingled with a majestic or reverent solemnity which seems to unite the participants into a timeless and universal fellowship.

Although in no way discounting these aesthetic satisfactions, may we not raise the question whether it is necessary, in their realization, to lay as much stress as we do upon the transcendental import of the symbols which are employed. Can we not regard the symbols as expressing merely the way in which we, as individuals, feel when viewing or participating in such ceremonies? The reply of institutionalists, of course, would be that to treat symbols in this fashion during the public occasion in which they are used would be to lessen, if not entirely to destroy, their emotional power. This is granted; but is that power which would be destroyed a necessary part of the aesthetic experience to which we have referred? Is it not perhaps an adulteration of that experience with other feelings, such as those of compulsory submission, superstition, and fear? Would there not still be a genuine beauty left, even though the force of the symbol for the securing of concerted action or submission would be lost? A more realistic treatment of institutional ceremonies would not, in my opinion, really detract from their aesthetic, religious, or moral value, but would on the contrary, purge them of much of the dross of superstition, arrogance, or false grandeur with which they are often associated. Our flag to me is no less beautiful if it stands only for that which I and my countrymen aim to be, rather than as the emblem of a great nation believed already to embody these qualities. In the former meaning we can still be true to facts; in the latter we are misled by fictions.

We must remember that the love of the beautiful, like the morale of concerted action, can, when unscrupulously exploited, be made to engross men and women to the exclusion of other im-

portant considerations. Political and religious symbols possessing great aesthetic value have been employed not only in humanitarian and religious movements, but in 'holy' wars, crusades, massacres, persecutions, national jingoism, and the suppression of intellectual freedom. If, in order to enjoy the beauty of our institutional symbols, we must associate them with such transcendent power and sanction, we pay for their beautifying far too high a price. Let us remember, also, that beauty is not connected with the symbols of institutions alone. It pervades the whole of life; it is experienced as truly, and far more enduringly, in those contacts where our participation is not limited to these formal and segmental activities, but expresses freely our personalities as men and women.

### III

Many of those who are concerned with practical affairs, while admitting the abuses of institutionalism which we have mentioned, will maintain that they are not necessary in a program of wise leadership. Our difficulties, in their view, are not due to an essential defect in institutions themselves, but only to the fact that we do not yet have the right sort of institutions. For notwithstanding the problems which they raise, institutions are, after all, the only tools which we possess; and it is our task not to waste time lamenting their existence, but to use them and to adapt them to our needs. The entire course of history, as seen by these observers, proves that men have progressed not merely by scrapping their institutions, but by preserving them, though subjecting them continually to revision. Similarly, our progress in the future will come not by the abandonment or diminishing of institutional behavior, but by its further elaboration and perfection.

This argument, though a very respectable one, appears to me to be not wholly convincing. It has, to be sure, an element of truth. Certainly some institutional patterns, for a given time and condition, are more satisfactory than others; and it is the part of wisdom to alter, rather than to retain, any of our institutional habits which have proved unsuited to the present need.

But it is easy to read too much into the argument of men's progress as coming from the institutional changes of history. Most of the changes in human institutions, it seems to me, have been due not so much to the wisdom of institutional leaders working toward a better social order through modifying these institutions, as to a few heroic figures, who, with no very clear program of social change in mind, have revolted against the institutional patterns of their time. In a large measure, also, such changes have been forced upon men through changing conditions, such as the invention of machinery, the rise of factory systems, and the expansion of business enterprise. This long history of suffering and conflict against the older order and the power of established authorities, a conflict for which individuals everywhere have paid the price, shows eloquently that past institutional changes have been due not so much to the deliberate change of institutions as a mode of progress, as to the struggle of men and women for life itself. Have institutional leaders of today a right to look back upon this process of change through dire necessity and to claim it as their own pre-ordained instrument for directing social progress? Does the fact that men have been forced continually to change their institutions to survive prove that by now suddenly taking the helm and directing this change we shall reach the highest social perfection? If we have to change our institutions in order to live at all, does that prove that by having institutions and by *changing* them we shall attain the most perfect and satisfying method of life?

If history is carefully read, we shall find, I believe, that many of the so-called changes in institutions were really not alterations at all, but abandonments. They were not deliberate modifications, or intentional passages from one form of societal control to another; they were rather the efforts of men to free themselves from institutional control altogether in the field of activity concerned. The tendency, for example, from feudalism and absolute monarchy towards democracy was probably not so much a conscious struggle towards a new form of government, as it was a revolt of individuals against control of their lives at so many points, a control which it had been possible for despots to exert only because of the institutional habits through which their

régime was established. In the religious field, in throwing off the domination of the Pope, the leaders of the protestant revolt were probably striving not so much to change religious institutions, that is, to establish immediately the organization of a new church, as they were to secure liberty of conscience and intellectual freedom for individuals. The people of the thirteen colonies were not, at the beginning of the Revolution, trying to set up a new American Government, but to rid themselves of the control of English rulers.

It has ever been the fate of men when these new insights and this freedom from institutional shackles have been won, gradually to evolve new institutional habits under new leaders, habits which though different in character, have oppressed and bound them almost as rigidly as before. When the people of the thirteen colonies were free from their habits of political submission to the English sovereign, they proceeded to develop new institutional habits of an economic character so complex that those who were seeking self-determination were again thwarted. Though disabused of superstition and free from Papal authority, dissenters have developed new creeds, rituals, and ecclesiastical organizations which have enslaved them almost as much as the old. Those who are enamored of the pious dogma of social evolution as the infallible progress of institutions toward the best possible world have closed their eyes to a large part of the meaning of these changes throughout history. Blind to what institutional behavior really means in the lives of individuals, they envisage these successive revolts and enslavements of men, this cycle from institutionalism to individualism and back again, as a great harmonious panorama of progress. They see institutions quietly shifting, like the scenery of a play, as 'Society' continues the drama of its triumphant, onward march. The helplessness and tragedy of men, ever wresting themselves free, yet ever succumbing again to the lust for power and organization, are unseen by such as these. They cannot, therefore, understand that when men throw off the habits of an institution, they may not be seeking immediately to set up a new one, but to free themselves from institutionalism as a way of life.

As in historical perspective so in the problems now before us,



we can see that the need is not so much for new types of institutions as for some means by which to put back into life that which our excessive institutionalism has taken from it. And for this problem neither the alteration of present institutions nor the creation of new ones can offer an adequate solution. No organized welfare agencies, no matter how carefully and elaborately planned, can give back to our family relationship that face to face sharing of experiences and that value for the development of character which it is in danger of losing through our present social organization. Neither specialization of teaching nor improvement of school technique can restore that immediacy, in the relation of students to their environment, which, through our present institutionalism in education, we are now destroying. The enlistment of more experts and the establishment of new departments in governmental service will never give back to common citizens that opportunity for self-expression in governance which these processes have already usurped. So long as our goal is cheaper and larger scale production, no further institutional change, either in employment-manager relationships or in the ownership of industrial capital, can restore that immediate, purposeful, and creative contact of workmen with their materials which existed before our present industrial institutions developed.

The reason why the expedient of improving our institutions cannot surmount these difficulties is that these problems are, in large part, the result not of poor or badly adjusted institutions, but of institutional behavior itself. Organized coöperation, though justly esteemed as an instrument for getting something done, becomes, when carried beyond a certain point, a menace to living rather than an aid. When we recognize some defect in our co-operative pattern we set out to cure it by changing the pattern, or by supplementing, or perhaps replacing it, by a new one. But this change or supplementation often fails to reach the heart of the trouble. For we are working always with the pattern as such; we seldom touch immediately the problems of the individuals in whose maladjustment the real inadequacy of the pattern is to be found. In trying to cure the evils of institutionalism through further manipulation of institutional habits, we must treat all individuals within a given class exactly alike. In-

stitutional habits must be uniform in citizens or they are useless for any rôle in social organization. And these uniform habits, expressing common segments of interest or behavior in everyone, really cut across *all* individual personalities, without ever fully representing *one*. To carry out improvements in an industrial organization each executive and worker, from the top down, must perform certain duties in a relatively fixed and standardized manner. Few opportunities exist for expressing the full range of any individual's potentialities; for coöperation, looking toward the improvement of the 'whole,' requires that each individual must forego his own preferences and 'do his bit' in the whole scheme exactly as it has been assigned to him. A voter at the polls, though he may be coöperating in a movement to better his institutions, cannot express his wish in any full and genuine manner; he can check only one of a small number of candidates or issues, alternatives which have been placed before him by circumstances over which he has little, if any, control. The real trouble with these institutions in the first place was, not that they did not run smoothly, but that they had left out of account so much that was near and vital to the individuals concerned. And our attempts at a cure, based as they are upon institutional methods, must still neglect these interests of individuals as wholes. In each new attempt we can only seize upon some other common segment of behavior in the hope of curing a common defect, and in so doing we miss the personalities of individuals from a different approach. No matter to what segment of life we minister, so long as it is only a segment our treatment must be hopelessly one-sided. Unless this fact be realized, we shall go on trying to cure institutionalism by institutions, spurred on by the false hope that we can restore lost values to individuals through the very instruments by which they have lost them. We shall always be distracted and drawn away from the needs of particular individuals toward newly conceived needs of 'society' which we seek to satisfy by the smoother running of our institutions. But each new institutional process added will only bring new evils in the dissociation of human lives. The more institutions we have, the more, it will seem to us, we shall need.

Is this not precisely what is happening about us today? A

widespread maladjustment, or social problem, is seen, and an institutional process is set up to solve it. This expedient, however, seldom fails to bring a further problem of its own, thus inaugurating a new dilemma which could not have been foreseen. A new institutional provision for this new difficulty is accordingly made, only to lead to a still further unpredicted evil; and so on indefinitely. As business practices have specialized and multiplied, giving to business men an increasingly widespread control of human affairs, it has become necessary to devise new institutional practices of government to control, or at least to adapt us to these economic changes. While such provisions have cured some of the economic abuses, they have brought many new problems of their own. There has resulted an appalling increase of regulatory legislation. There have followed the obscurity and complexity of government through 'lobbies,' through 'balancing of vested interests,' and through executive departments and utility commissions whose members are likely to become powerless, or even corrupt, in the grip of the business leaders they are supposed to curb. The multiplicity of regulatory laws and the difficulty of enforcing them have produced a serious problem in the legislative and judicial fields. New inquiries, commissions, and other institutional provisions are now needed to remedy these later evils. To take another example, the exploitation of monopolies in business has led to the setting up of laws and commissions to keep the field of competition open. Yet competition has also brought its evils in the wastes of overhead costs of small establishments, competitive advertising, 'high-pressure' selling, and ruthless reductions in quality, wages, and employment. To cure some of these conditions and to effect economies, mergers have been formed, holding companies established, and the chain store system developed. But through these higher and more centralized controls of business new problems have arisen, such as unjust enrichment through re-capitalization, speculation in stock values, and the evils of absentee ownership. For dealing with these issues we must perfect still further institutional devices. Wherever we turn, in civic, political, or economic affairs, in the educational field as in the religious, we find a continual change and elabora-

tion of institutional patterns to solve new problems which are continually emerging. Surely, a remedy which makes necessary in its application an ever increasing amount of itself should inspire in us no great degree of confidence. It seems to me that the trouble with our institutions is not that they are backward or imperfect, or that some are advanced while others are retarded, but simply that they are institutions. Our most vexing dilemmas arise not from the fact that we lack the *right* institutions but from the fact that we have institutions at all.

The truth of this interpretation is usually not seen in its full force because we are so habituated to our institutional method of living that we cannot imagine how any other method could exist. A still more potent reason for our limitations, however, lies in the feeling of helplessness of single individuals in the presence of a vast and inconceivably complex society. As individuals we have to struggle to our utmost merely to keep abreast of our complex institutional requirements and duties as they are. Having neither the time, the energy, nor the knowledge to cope with the problem in its entirety we must delegate it to our experts and our institutional leaders. As a rule, however, these officials work through institutional channels; they are always prone to think in terms of the needs of institutions rather than of individuals. Their interest in their particular specialty and in maintaining their positions are all too often the motives through which societal changes are directed. A vicious circle is here created. The more powerless we are as individuals in a life regulated through institutional behavior, the more we tend to place the management of our problems upon the shoulders of the few whose business is to keep the institutions running; and the more we delegate control to these persons the more institutional in character are the remedies provided, and the smaller, therefore, becomes our chance, as individuals, to find our way out of the dilemmas by which we are confronted.

The circle of institutional futility can be shown in still another way. Those who espouse the deliberate modification of institutions as the preëminent method for progress take upon themselves a certain burden of proof. They must be able to judge whether

or not a proposed change is desirable. They must assure us of some adequate criterion for deciding which of two proposed institutions is really the better. Now the only just ground for evaluating an institutional practice is obviously its service to the lives of human beings. But in attempting to judge institutions in practice we frequently find that no clear decision can be given, for the simple reason that this criterion cannot be unequivocally applied. For when we attempt to apply it our judgment becomes confused by our inability to view the good of individuals as separate from the good of the 'institutional pattern.' If we assume that our basic institutional pattern is good (and such an assumption is implied by our seeking progress through gradual, rather than through subversive change), we will then be likely to accept the conclusion that an institutional change which will harmonize with it and facilitate it is also good. If we believe the fundamental pattern to be bad, then we might reject this proposed change, even though it promised a certain definite human benefit; and conversely, we might regard a certain questionable change as not so harmful as might be supposed if only it will discredit and lead us to reject the basic institutional pattern itself.

As a respectable example, let us consider organized charity. This recently developed practice undoubtedly helps needy individuals; but on the other hand, in alleviating the distress which results from our present economic organization, it is a method also of supporting the latter institutional system and of keeping it in existence as the accepted habits of men and women. Those who believe that our economic institutions are basically sound and should be preserved will welcome organized charity as an institutional innovation in the direction of progress. Those who are convinced upon the other hand, that our economic pattern is wrong, will quite as logically decry organized charity, which tends to support it, as doing more ultimate harm to individuals than good. The same can be said of many recent legislative proposals, such as old age pensions, unemployment insurance, federal reserve boards, reconstruction financing corporations, and agricultural subsidies. These institutional changes and inventions can be evaluated only within the framework of our

particular political and economic system. A vote to install them is a vote not merely for the welfare of certain individuals now in need, but for maintaining our present institutional pattern basically as it is. The question of the ultimate value for individuals of this pattern itself is an issue which we almost never raise. Failing to gain a detailed perspective for re-examining it or a confidence great enough to change it, we accept it fundamentally as it is. But unless this question of the merit of the pattern is raised, we shall never be able to secure the broadest basis for passing judgment upon institutional changes which are proposed. We can never free ourselves from the bias of our institutional habits long enough to ignore them and look only at the individual personalities affected. We thus move in a circle from a maladjustment in the pattern to proposed change, and on to a new institutional maladjustment, without ever seeing the human realities beneath. The only way in which we can break through this circle and bring the issue home to individuals is to examine boldly the significance of the institutional pattern itself.

#### IV

There are some students of social problems who will say that all these arguments are beside the point. Whether good or bad, institutions exist. According to many observers, they are inescapable facts of the social order. History, according to this opinion, shows institutions to be inevitable. Infants are molded by them in succeeding generations, civilization demands them, progress seems unthinkable without them. Institutions as a part of human culture are believed, in this view, to grow, develop, and change by laws and principles of their own. Hence it is foolish for us to discuss the question as though it were a matter of our own volition and choice. In support of this argument impressive statistics have been brought together. Its advocates have presented 'curves' and 'cycles' showing the trends of cultural growth, arguing that, since development has taken place in accordance with a certain law in the past, its course is therefore pre-determined for the future.

These assumptions seem to me to be based upon a misunderstanding of scientific procedure. It is conceded, of course, that we must accept the facts of cultural acceleration and the elaboration of institutions and inventions which the societal determinists have pointed out. It is a far cry, however, from this description of what has happened in the past to an assured prediction for the future. The instances cited in support of the theory, though impressive, cover but a part of human civilization and a period of time which, when measured against the entire span of men's existence, is so short as to be almost momentary. The doctrine of cultural determination, moreover, is open to an objection from the standpoint of scientific methods. Invoking, as it does, the notion of natural law operating in the superorganic world of society and culture, its use assumes that societal conditions are sufficiently stable to permit definite social laws to be discovered by men. Nearly everything we know at present about social phenomena tends to contradict this assumption. Societal or cultural determinism becomes a particularly dubious philosophy when there is read into cultural acceleration some mysterious power which is believed to make institutions and inventions develop as they do, regardless of what individual human beings may desire. When this interpretation is accepted we leave the field of careful scientific description for the pursuit of the supernatural.

However satisfying such speculations may be to those who indulge in them, they are quite unfitted for any genuine service in research. We cannot say what determines human behavior and culture; we do not know, indeed, whether they are determined at all. We can only note the trends of behavior as they exist at present or examine the record of such changes in the past. We know what institutional behavior *is*; but we do not know what it *must be*; nor do we know that it must be anything. We cannot declare that 'society' is developing according to certain laws or that it makes individuals conform to this development; we can only note that individuals about us are changing their behavior, fairly uniformly, in certain ways. No matter how many curves of these 'societal' changes we may plot, we cannot prove that any

law of social evolution or any cosmic necessity has compelled human behavior to change in just that manner.

But quite apart from the question of social determinism as a scientific concept, we find that the generalizations of the culture-determinists are in a different category from those of the physical and biological scientists. For, since our own behaviors are the units in terms of which the societal 'law' is stated, we have a personal relationship to the law itself. Changes in our own attitudes may enter into the working of the 'social law' itself, in a way which would be quite unknown in realms of the physical or biological sciences. Let us suppose, for example, that an instructor in botany should teach that the stem of a plant grows downward, while the roots grow upward. Such a teaching, of course, would make not the slightest difference to the plant itself. It would not even be seriously misleading or harmful for pedagogy; for a student who accepted it would be obliged speedily to correct his error upon his first contact with actual plants. And the teacher who was guilty of such glaring inaccuracies would be almost certain to be discredited and eliminated from the work of teaching. When we come to the social sciences, however, a marked difference is presented. Let us imagine that an instructor in history should teach his students that the Monroe Doctrine and the policy of American isolation are vital principles which control the foreign relations of the United States; or that a professor of government should represent the Constitution as an accepted and a perfect document, containing solutions for every problem which may in the future arise. In these instances the teacher is not merely transmitting a knowledge of events, attitudes, and conditions; he is really making them. As a result of his teaching (if it can be made sufficiently universal) the Monroe Doctrine and the isolation policy may actually become the symbols which express the foreign relationships of Americans, regardless of whether they have been effective in the past or not. The Constitution may, as a result of such teaching, come actually to be preserved as a perfect instrument, amended only with extreme difficulty, and used as a means of combating every progressive enterprise. As a statement of literal fact the teacher's dictum



may be false; yet, through the very fact that it is uttered, it may become true. Teachers therefore, in transmitting these stereotyped notions to their students, are really re-creating the 'social order' in the citizens of tomorrow; and it is these teachers, rather than the laws of cultural determinism or societal continuity, whom we must hold responsible for the control of human conduct. When human behavior is altered through their teaching, the institutions are correspondingly changed. A universal recognition of this fact would go a long way toward shattering the fiction of social determinism.

In part, the argument of determinism is based upon the limited perspective of a single individual<sup>1</sup> who is trying to conceive society as a whole. If cities keep on getting larger, if buildings grow taller and taller, if machines multiply, if living becomes increasingly rapid and institutions continually more pervasive and complex, there seems to be nothing which a single individual can do about it. Furthermore, since it is natural that almost every individual should feel the same way, and since an individual is aware that each of his fellows feels the same insignificance and helplessness as he, it is only a step to the conclusion that the control of societal development lies entirely outside of human power. This widespread spell of a pluralistic ignorance and helplessness concerning mankind in the aggregate prompts us to project 'Society' as a kind of collective, superhuman being, acting through its own will or in accordance with its own law.

The fallacy of this conclusion is demonstrated by instances in which individuals have broken through the veil of pluralistic ignorance and have taken matters in their own hands. The biological needs of individuals in certain metropolitan areas have led to restrictions in the building of skyscrapers of such a nature that a new type of architecture has developed. No consideration of the curve or trend of material culture alone could have enabled us to predict such an event as this; for it has proceeded, not from cultural determinism, but from individuals' needs and from the forming of new attitudes in men and women.

The lessons taught us by severe economic depressions illustrate the same possibility. How are those who believe the upward

trend, or progress, of material culture to be an unalterable law to explain the recession of business which we witness in a crisis such as the present? They will no doubt try to explain away such phenomena as mere 'accidents,' 'irregularities,' or 'cycles' which obtrude themselves into the working of an otherwise constant trend. Is not such an explanation, however, a mere begging of the question? If, during a period of anxious stress and an era of economic and personal re-evaluation, men and women have been able, unintentionally, to upset the 'law of material progress,' can they not also do this deliberately when they choose? Perhaps the present upheaval represents a period when men are not producing an accidental irregularity in the law of cultural determinism, but only coming to themselves. When affairs are running smoothly and we have prosperity our leaders point with pride and assurance to 'our institutions' and to the 'economic laws of society.' When things go wrong these leaders, though still pleading for faith in our institutions, are quick to turn to individuals for the remedy. Individuals are urged to stand by the ship of state, with acts of devotion and self-sacrifice, until the storm is over and the economic laws can once more waft us propitiously over a tranquil sea. Such is the cant of some of our institutional leaders.

The accelerating trend of material culture by which social determinists are so impressed may be an indication merely that our attention has been upon the mastering of our physical environment, to the neglect of other values of our lives. We have as yet scarcely attempted to understand, or even to formulate, the problems of adjusting our needs and expressing our personalities in an environment of our fellow beings. Resting content with our heritage of institutional living, we have turned our drive and ingenuity toward technological invention; and we have elaborated new patterns of institutional habits as methods of using these inventions. All this has been done without proper consideration of what the employment of such institutions and inventions may mean in the lives of the individuals concerned. So long as the institutions 'worked,' no other questions were asked; and the curve of technological discovery, organization, and promotion

has continued its steady ascent. But shall we always take our institutionalism and our philosophy of technological progress as the final word in human adjustments? May we not some day call into question the entire method of living and the entire pattern of organization which has brought the supposed law of the cultural determinists into being? May we not turn our efforts from invention, engineering, and institutional planning to the task of fulfilling ourselves as personalities in a world of our fellow men? Should that day come, the accelerated, upward trend of material and institutional development would receive a check, and the 'law' of cultural determinism would be seen as one of the illusions of a bygone age.

## V

At this point the reader may be inclined to raise the following objection: Granted that control of individuals by institutions and by trends of culture as such is an illusion, how can we get people at large to dispel this notion and to take the helm for themselves? So old and settled is the idea of a controlling 'society,' to which each of us must conform or perish, that it has become almost our second nature to believe it. Such a belief, it may be urged, may serve a useful present purpose; for without it the social order might become chaotic and insecure. Though it be conceded that the notion of a superhuman, societal determinism is a fiction; most persons are by nature so indifferent to civic matters and so inert in making any effort to control their own destinies that the result is practically the same as it would be if this fiction were true.

To this I would reply that I am advocating no immediate or sweeping change. Institutional habits, if suddenly abolished today, would probably be developed again tomorrow, and would continue so long as there remained work for them to accomplish. The course which I am proposing, moreover, does not require morale or civic spirit in the sense of an organized coöperation; it needs only tolerance, unselfishness, and an attitude of fair play. The society of which I am thinking has no helm for any one to take. Organizing to free ourselves from the incubus of institutionalism

would be likely only to lead to institutionalism in another form. As against such a repetition of our present failures, I would urge, as the only effective method, the determination of all individuals consistently to live their own lives. I would urge that they refuse to be coerced by a creed of social determinism or by an illusion of the 'Great Society' or of the demands of 'social progress' as embodied in institutions rather than in men and women. If enough individuals come, through independent and sincere conviction, to this awakening, the control of cultural changes can be achieved without new forms of organization and without the use of institutional habits. If individuals generally fail to gain such insight, no effort of a few toward control through institutional channels will be of the least avail.

Suppose that such a liberation from institutional ideology should be accomplished, and that men and women everywhere should begin their search for individuality and self-realization. What then? The reader may justly ask for some direction or some indication of the next step in this new and untried course. I have, however, no plan to present, no vision of the promised land to offer. I am suggesting merely a possible direction of change, a path different from that which we are at present following. I would take the reader back from all our present bewilderment, from our present chaos of successes and failures, of happiness and tragedy, to a fork in the road which we have overlooked. At this fork stands a signpost pointing in a different direction. What lies at the end of this new road I do not know; it is my task to point out merely that the road exists.

The process by which these changes are to be brought about is not one of crusading or of propaganda for a cause. It must be an inner, psychological re-orientation, rather than an outer, or societal, program. It will point not toward a distant, perfect society for which men are collectively striving, but toward values to be realized in the lives of individuals themselves, as the older institutional patterns are given up. There must be an acquisition of insight, a personal sense of justice, a kindness, a tolerance, and a willingness of each individual to make whatever sacrifice is necessary for the self-expression of others. As increasing leis-

ure is provided the values of such leisure will not be those merely of filling time; they will be the aims and interests of particular individuals. And we shall train ourselves, through closer contacts with nature and our fellows, to realize more fully what these values are. Revolution or catastrophe may hasten the process, but our objective can be finally gained only through the self-teaching, the reflection, and the insight of men and women themselves.

If the opportunity for such self-expression is to become universal, it must clearly become self-limiting so far as individuals are concerned. For it can become a method of living enjoyed by all only when each individual strives for self-expression in a manner which does not prevent others from pursuing the same end. It is only in such proportion as we are willing to meet this condition that our present institutional controls can be given up. Though we seem to be progressing in this direction, it is clear that individuals must be ready for still greater concessions and sacrifices to one another before true self-realization can become a fact. Men must be willing to forego the hope of personal enrichment through the hazards and struggle of business competition, before the system which enables the few to profit in greater measure than the many can be abolished. Before the institutions of national sovereignty and militarism can be discarded, men in organized national groups must be willing to do without those advantages of wealth and power which they are able, through nationalistic competition, to acquire. They must develop, in other words, not only an insight into the motives behind their institutionalism, but a capacity to re-evaluate and to alter those motives. There must come into being a more socialized viewpoint and a deeper altruism, not merely among institutional leaders, nor as the slogan of our institutions, but in the daily lives of men and women everywhere. When this shall have been accomplished, mutual personal adjustments and understandings will be developed whereby each individual will have an opportunity for self-expression equal to that of every other. And these new understandings, as the method of the future society, will replace the institutional patterns and habits of today.

The displacement of our present institutional behavior by such

unorganized, informal, and highly socialized attitudes seems at first glance to be an objective whose realization lies a long way off. In a complete and absolute sense this is perhaps true. But may not its accomplishment be a matter of degree, a goal to strive for step by step? And if viewed from the standpoint of the educators and parents who are guiding young people toward the society of tomorrow, the problem does not look so hopeless. 'Societal' changes are usually conceived as slow and almost unconscious. To attempt to change 'society' directly and deliberately seems a well-nigh hopeless undertaking. To help *individuals*, however, to change their behavior, to arouse new attitudes, and to encourage our youths in a new way of looking at life,—these are by no means impracticable objectives. And if we enable a sufficient number of individuals to make this newer adjustment, shall we not, indeed, have changed society itself? Everywhere, in the fields of business, industry, government, and religion, we see the present leaders clamoring for the control of the education of children in order that the institutional habits and fictions in which they have a special interest may be perpetuated. And can we not, *per contra*, image that obsolescence and effacement of these habits which could be achieved in a single generation through our steadfast opposition to all such forms of indoctrination? What sweeping changes and abandonments could be accomplished within a few decades by inculcating in boys and girls a more critical attitude with respect to corporate business, or with regard to mass production, technological invention, economic imperialism, tariff exclusion, immigration restrictions, national sovereignty, military preparedness, narrowed vocational training, the stereotyped position of women, and the various modern substitutes for family life. And in comparison with the humble work of teachers and parents in their building of these attitudes through their daily, intimate contacts with children, the influence of those in higher places would fade insignificantly away.

For providing that immediacy of living through which the decline of institutionalism may be hastened, one of our greatest hopes, I believe, is to be found in women. This is not because women are by nature less inclined to institutional fictions than

men, but merely because men have, in the past, usurped the rôle of institution-builders, and are at present the major officials and rulers of institutional practices in every field. Though conditions are changing in this respect, women have not yet nearly as many vested interests as men in the existing patterns of institutional behavior. They are probably freer, therefore, to work toward those values of self-expression which many of us as individuals, are seeking. The careers of women, it may be hoped, will be found not merely in entering the world of man-made institutions, but in remaking it. Shaking off the stigma of supposed sex differences and inferiorities against which they have long struggled, women may emerge and find their new rôles in helping individuals to realize the potentialities which are latent within them. Men have forged inventions for the winning of leisure, and have built powerful organizations for exploiting these inventions. To women may fall the task of developing those human resources through which leisure must be enjoyed, and of showing the futility, for this purpose, of organization in the absence of the insight and the self-determination of individuals. If men have provided the forms and tools by which life can be lived, it may be for women to develop the future content of life itself. The task of women is no longer merely the supplying of domestic creature comforts, but the fostering of well-rounded characters which will save us from the follies and disasters toward which we are drifting.

## VI

With the understanding, therefore, that our goal requires no sudden relinquishment of outer controls but an inner change of attitude, that it is not a counsel of perfection, but an educational principle and a plan to work toward step by step, can we not obtain a clearer notion of what the newer individualism may be like? Although it is impossible to predict definitely or to describe the content of life in this new era, the following general characterizations may be indicated. In pursuit of this new individualism, which should be distinguished from the older doctrine of economic individualism and *laissez faire*, we shall be pri-

marily concerned not with the integrity of the social and economic structure, but with the opportunity of individuals for attaining a fullness of experience and an integrity in their own lives. Both the organic needs and the psychological tendencies—that is, the traits, the desires, and the potentialities of individuals—will occupy the center of our attention. Our aim will be the attainment of the ‘good life’ for individuals as such a life is conceived by the individuals themselves. The building of the best possible society will not primarily concern us, but only the development of the capacities of individuals; and such a development, moreover, will be for the satisfaction which individuals obtain in the process, rather than for the rôle which these capacities may play in the scheme or pattern of society. Activities and occupations will grow out of human interests, not out of the requirements of a society organized in particular institutional channels. We shall set the stage for the development of personalities. The ‘laws’ of an individual’s life and character will be more highly esteemed than the laws of our institutions; and the latter will be maintained principally as a means of safeguarding the former. Instead of resting content with a passive liberation, through material invention, from privation, toil, and danger, we shall demand, also, an opportunity to express our individual differences of ability and character in a more positive fashion. We shall foster individuality through immediate touch with our environment, both in its raw materials and in the human contacts which life affords. And we shall see to it that our youths shall live in a world in which they can learn to make such immediate adjustments, rather than in a world of mechanical inventions, institutional habits, fictions, and symbols which men have sought to interpose between themselves and the raw environment.

It must be made clear that the individualism which I am seeking is no mere reversion to the past. Some of the values for which I am pleading were perhaps more attainable in the earlier community and family living than in our present complex civilization. Nevertheless, in its larger aspects, the era of self-expression which I am projecting has probably never existed in human history. I know of no earlier, golden age for which, with all its



faults, I should wish to exchange our present civilization. For there is possible today a basis for the attainment of an individualism of self-expression which has never before existed. We have now the knowledge and the resources for living in health instead of disease, and in security rather than in peril. We can gain our livelihood through leisurely exertion instead of the hardship and the weariness of primitive toil. Provided only we do not make our mechanical servants so efficient that they take from us the needed experience of our own biological adjustments, our lives may be made more felicitous and expressive than ever before. We can weave into the pattern of our biological self-fulfillment the unlimited cultivation of the humane arts and the pursuit of knowledge. We can not only satisfy those needs which are common to the race; we can develop also, through immediacy in our physical world and in human fellowships, those traits and abilities which are peculiar to individual personalities. All these benefits can now be ours if we can but discover the secret of how to live happily together.

No social method or formula of the past, however, can reveal to us this secret for our life today. No code of rules, no matter how well the earlier codes may have safeguarded life at certain points, has as yet done service for that one 'golden' rule in the presence of which codes and institutions are unnecessary. It is only in our steady approach to such a formula, to an ideal of social living for individuals, rather than for institutions, that the newer individualism can be attained. And it is at this point, which is so crucial, that we are not, in my opinion, devoid of hope. Difficult as it may be to prove that human beings are more fair-minded, tolerant, and willing to share life's benefits with others than they have been in generations past, there are, however, some indications that this is true. For my own part, at least, I am so convinced that such changes of human character are possible, that I am willing to hold to this possibility as a hope and a guide for the future. It is now easier than formerly for men, at least within their own nations, to look with justice and compassion upon their less fortunate fellows. Our greater freedom from toil and the abolishment of the necessity for the strong to wrest their

existence from a hostile environment at the expense of the weak have given us an opportunity to look about us and to consider the welfare of our fellow men. With the relinquishment of the habits through which individuals are organized for struggle into nations, groups, and classes, it may be possible to extend this cordial feeling throughout an ever-widening circle. The ease of communication and travel in our modern world, the swift spreading of news, the rubbing of elbows with all classes and conditions of men,—such opportunities ought to help us in decreasing isolation, deepening human confidence, and developing a latent motive for social expression. History has already given evidence of an increase of altruism in the disappearance of such coercions as the whipping post, the pillory, the torture chamber, slavery, feuds, and many of the crueller forms of political and religious persecution. The handling of debtors, delinquents, and criminals is now far more humane than in earlier generations; while methods of caring for the indigent, the sick, and the mentally ill have shown a steady increase both in efficiency and in humanitarian spirit. Men and women are probably more sensitive than formerly to the horrors of famines, epidemics, plagues, and other disasters in all parts of the world, and more eager, just as they are now more able, to help in such periods of misfortune. Though the time may not yet be at hand, there is surely reason to hope that the sympathy and benevolence which individuals now display by organized effort in crises may some day be extended freely to the more ordinary relationships of life.

## VII

And now we come to our final issue with those who place their faith upon institutions rather than upon the characters of individuals. For it seems strange beyond belief that some observers who have witnessed these altruistic advances have argued that they are the products not so much of individuals, as of the institutions of society. It is as though these mysterious agencies we call our institutions were able to work, by a law of their own purpose or nature, toward righteousness, and to inspire in human beings a moral feeling and an enthusiasm greater than that

which they could otherwise possess. As one writer has cryptically declared: "If we set our hearts on having a righteous state we can have one more righteous than any individual."<sup>1</sup> Institutions, in other words, are alleged to be better than the individuals through whose behavior they are manifested. But even where a more critical view is taken and the improvement is represented as due not to institutions as such, but to men who are working *through* their institutions, it is the institution, rather than the characters of individuals, which is regarded by such writers as the indispensable condition of that progress. This viewpoint is exemplified in the following quotation from a contemporary social student:

Looking at history, one is inclined to think that the progress of the world to date has not been due to any great extent to the improvement of human character; it has been due almost wholly to improvement in human institutions. Men have not changed themselves much as individuals; rather, they have changed the agencies and expressions of their collective life. It seems that the better world will always be a world of better institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Such a position seems to me quite illogical. Either institutions are the habits and attitudes of individuals or else we do not know, explicitly, what they are. In the latter instance, we cannot possibly know that they are any better or any worse than the characters of the individuals concerned. And if we regard them simply as habits, how can we impute to them values or ideals? We frequently say that a man has a fine character, or is righteous; but we do not say that particular habits of his have such characteristics. For these are qualities which are meaningless unless they refer to a human personality as a whole. And if we are asked to believe that institutions work improvement in human society without themselves possessing human values, we must inquire how they are able to do this. Are they disembodied spirits who control a moral universe? If men, as the author last quoted

<sup>1</sup> Cooley, C. H., *Social Organization*. Scribner's Sons (1924), p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> Hertzler, J. O., *Social Institutions*. McGraw-Hill Book Co. (1929), p. 214.

asserts, have changed the 'expressions of their collective life' so as to embody in their institutions ideals which they do not themselves possess, we are again faced with a paradox. How can this higher expression of collective living be developed without an improved type of individual character which is to develop it and to participate in it? If the progress of society has been due almost wholly to the improvement in institutions, who, or what, has improved the institutions? If men have so changed their institutional habits as to make society more righteous, must they not have changed as individuals, to the extent, at least, of wishing to put those ideals of righteousness into operation? Do noble results come consistently out of base and ignoble natures? Let us try to imagine a state or a church which is more righteous than any of its members. Where, or in whom, or what, does such righteousness exist? Is not the state or church conceived in this sense really an ideal or a concept of individuals? Such an ideal institution is not a thing which can be proved, explicitly, to exist. Is it not, rather, a symbol of virtues which we wish to think of our institutions as embodying? And is it not to the credit of individuals, rather than of these projected institutions, that they find it within themselves to set up such standards toward which they can aspire?

Much of the confusion upon this point has arisen from a false distinction between human nature and culture. Impressed by the fact that the native reflex activities of infants are the same the world over and have persisted, apparently in the same form, for untold ages, some social students have tried to establish a category of behavior which they have called the 'original and unchanging nature of man.' As these crude and simple inborn reactions of an infant become modified through his responses to the people and the objects about him, their original and primitive character becomes obscured or completely lost. A complex pattern of habits, composed of elaborate and sophisticated institutional activities, is seen to take their place. The original, egoistic method of satisfying the individual's needs has been curbed and another method, more socialized and almost opposite in character, has been substituted. It seems almost as though the

individual becomes a product of the 'group' or of 'society,' rather than of his own biological ancestry. Viewing human development in this light, certain social scientists have proposed that all this range of modifications of the original tendencies should be set apart from those tendencies themselves as a separate category, to which the name of 'culture' or 'civilization' should be applied. Thus arises the notion of *culture* as something entirely distinct from, and even antithetical to, *human nature*.

In making this sharp distinction, however, the 'culturists' have created false compartments in a continuous life process where there are really inextricable unity and blending. For although our cultural habits do take on the character of the societal pattern in which we are reared, they are, nevertheless, always a part of our own organically grounded system of habits; they could not have been learned by us except as modifications of those biological tendencies with which we were born. There is a gradation in children's development which makes it impossible to state what elements of their behavior pattern has come by inheritance and what has come by contact with the 'culture' of the surrounding group. By the time the child has grown to adulthood, our every attempt to separate activities which are 'native' from those which are 'cultural' in origin seems doomed to fail. What warrant then has a social scientist for asserting that only the earliest and crudest reactions, such as those of infantile hunger, and of withdrawing, rejecting, struggling, and crying are to be called human nature, while all the activities which appear later as learned modifications of these earlier responses, as habits through which the functions of the latter can be better served, are *not* human nature, but culture? What justification is there for believing that such habits lie outside the sphere of psychological or biological realities, in some purely 'super-organic,' or 'societal,' realm? An individual's regard for others and his habits of living and coöperating with them are ways also of satisfying his own needs as an organic being. His tastes and preferences, his desire for affection and security, his special skills, and the habits which he has learned as a vocation,—all these are ways in which his physical human nature, that is, his bodily equipment of muscle, gland, and nerve,

has come to function. Though not fully evident at birth, all these responses nevertheless have been developed, by trial and error adjustment, from the use of responses which *were* truly inherited. Are not these behaviors, then, as truly a part of the individual's 'human nature' as his impulse to drink when thirsty, to satisfy his hunger and his sex desire, or to struggle against a dangerous enemy? The error of the 'culturists' lies in their unwarranted assumption that all human nature must be *inborn* nature. They have forgotten that the process of learning, through which individuals satisfy their natural wants in their physical or social environment, is as truly and characteristically a function of men's bodily endowment, that is of human nature, as are the primitive instinctive reactions with which individuals are born.

To put the matter in another way, why should we speak of that which an individual possesses by himself as though it were a product of 'human nature,' while denoting that which he has been taught by another as 'culture?' If A (for example, a parent) teaches something to B (a child), the thing taught must first have become the characteristic possession, that is, it must have become a part of the knowledge or of the behavior, of A. Either A or some other individual (or individuals), whom we should find if we could go back far enough in the history of the race, must have learned this behavior or discovered this knowledge for himself. This *original* discoverer or learner must have created his product directly out of his own ideas and experimental fumbings with nature. Since there was at that time no precedent of culture to teach him, he must have relied solely upon the potentialities of his own nature in contact with his primitive world. And so when we trace the development of civilization in a genetic sense, we see again the fallacy of trying to separate culture from human nature. Culture, unless we are ready to believe the mystical, does not create itself; it is made by human beings. And the resources which human beings of every generation have for creating *new* cultural products lie not merely in the cultural and institutional habits already transmitted to them, but in their own abilities, impulses, and desires, in short, in the 'human natures' of individuals themselves. There is no warrant, therefore,

for dividing the behavior of men as 'natural' beings and the cultural habits by which they adapt themselves into two separate categories. Human culture, at least in its implicit aspects, is not to be contrasted with human nature; it is a part of human nature itself.

But one false distinction has led to another. Having established in their own minds the belief that culture is something different from human nature, the proponents of a super-organic culture have next concluded that it must also be *independent* of human nature, and therefore independent of human beings. From such 'cultural autonomy' it is only a step to cultural determinism, that is, to the belief that culture is not only independent of human nature, but is stronger than the latter, in the sense that it compels individuals to adjust themselves to it. According to this theory culture is believed to have a trend which sweeps on, marshaling all human events before it in a mighty panorama of invention, institutional acceleration and readjustment. Some regard this panorama as the inevitable continuity and progress of Society. It is from such reasoning that the doctrine of institutions as the guardians and builders of morality has received much of its support. Institutions, as a part of culture, are believed to maintain themselves through the ages, prescribing the habits of men, and establishing in mandatory statutes their notions of right and wrong. This institutional structure is therefore thought of as carrying men on in the direction of material and spiritual progress. Thus the conclusion is reached that, as agencies for producing a righteous social order, institutions are indispensable adjuncts to human character. They are alleged to be even better than men. Though men make and operate them, they are believed to contribute those virtues to which human nature of itself could never aspire. Far from our carrying on morally without them, it is believed that our only hope for salvation lies in subjecting ourselves increasingly to their benign control.

To one, however, who refuses to separate men's societal relationships from the rest of their natures, this conclusion seems absurd. Throughout the ages men seem to have achieved increasingly higher standards of justice, kindness, and human welfare,

and at the same time they have developed an increasingly complex pattern of institutional habits. But we cannot say that the institutional development has produced the increased morality. Our institutionalism and our standards of personal conduct have developed together, and both form a part of our modern life. Institutions are implicitly denoted patterns of action composed of the common and reciprocal habits of human beings. These habits by no means comprise all of the behavior, or all of the values, of the individuals in whom they exist. They are on the contrary, only segments of the individuals' interests, habits which are used collectively as tools for accomplishing certain things which all the individuals wish to do. Now it is illogical to separate these purely instrumental habits from the individuals who possess them and set them up as standards of value independent of the individuals themselves. Only an individual, acting as an integrated, whole personality, can be said to possess such standards of ethical valuation. If individuals are unjust, selfish, or cruel the deeds accomplished through their institutional habits will be likely, in the long run, to be correspondingly inhumane. If the individuals are kind and just, the result of their institutional coöperation will probably be correspondingly beneficent. But whether kind or selfish, base or noble, our surest prediction of the ethical character of the outcome will be based not so much upon our knowledge of the institutional methods by which the acts are performed, as upon the character of the individuals who perform them. Let us therefore put aside the fiction of an institution transcendentally endowed with human virtues, and turn our attention to the things which individuals themselves are doing as they carry on their institutional activities. For only in this manner can we reveal the true ethical significance of institutional behavior and its bearing upon those objectives which we regard as good.

When the problem is seen from this approach the absolute virtues which we have projected upon our institutions seem to become less real and vital. The perfect magnanimity, human equality, and generosity which we imagine 'Our Country' to possess becomes at best a pious exaggeration. We find, instead, a great range and variety of our countrymen. Many of them are generous;



but some also are ignoble and mean. The ideal of absolute Justice which we imagine as embodied in 'The Law' resolves itself, when viewed in this realistic fashion, into the legalistic practices of men and the aims, some equitable, some iniquitous, which men are seeking, through litigation, to attain. Viewing the acts of individuals rather than the virtues of institutions, we are likewise no longer beguiled by the supreme righteousness of 'The Church.' We see, instead, specific church members and clergymen seeking to accomplish purposes which are often upright, but sometimes, also, base. In no case can the merits we ascribe to our institutions be accepted as a guarantee of the virtuous motives of the men and women concerned. We probably do not need institutional symbols upon which to project our moral standards in order to have these standards as individuals. And unless we already value ethical conduct in our private lives, we shall be unlikely to be moved in that direction by ideals 'embodied in our institutions.'

It is true, of course, that there are, and may long continue to be, an unscrupulous and dangerous minority who, in the absence of standards forced upon them in the name of institutions, would not only act in an inhuman manner themselves, but would make it difficult for others to maintain a standard of fairness and generosity in their social relationships. In this fact the institutionalists have a sound argument; and to the extent to which this condition exists, institutional behavior is, in a negative sense at least, an important condition of a universal and stable morality. But notwithstanding the inspiration which some regard as coming from institutional symbols of virtue, notwithstanding the service of institutional behavior as a means of ethical expression and of restraining the anti-social, there must be charged against our modern institutionalism certain definite losses in the ethical field.

Through it we frequently hide from ourselves both the responsibility for our own misdeeds, and our own feeling of altruism. Through institutional performance we deprive ourselves of the personal and satisfying expression of many qualities which we regard as beautiful and fine. Institutional habits make it possible for the strong to prey upon the weak, for the rich, unchallenged,

to exploit the poor. They make it possible for a few men to reap a personal advantage, while destroying the opportunity of others for self-expression or even for security in the essentials of life. Institutional behavior has become a means of sacrificing the fullness of living in communities and homes to the obsession of economic production and to the drive for material luxury and display. Through institutionalism, industrial leaders have deprived many workers of self realization in their work. They have promised us an effortless leisure; but this leisure instead of bringing happiness portends a hollow mockery of life's present values. We have produced, through institutional habits, a pattern of relationships so complicated that individuals cannot have an effective voice in the government of their own affairs or in the conditions under which they live. Though restraining certain criminals, we have enabled crimes of far greater magnitude to be committed. Institutional behavior has afforded the organization and the symbols through which avarice, bigotry, and hatred have run their course, and by means of which the instigators, instead of being condemned, are often upheld as 'guardians of the Faith' or as leaders of the Nation.' Through our institutional habits we have developed welfare agencies instead of families, experts where we needed community, remoteness from nature where we craved immediacy, fragments of living where we needed the whole. We have given ourselves a job instead of a vocation, form instead of content, quantity instead of quality, creed instead of adventure, and salvation through institutional ritual in place of individual effort and growth. All these shortcomings and failures must be weighed in the balance along with the services which institutional habits have rendered. And when the final appraisal is made, what judge would declare that institutions, rather than individuals, are responsible for the ethical progress of mankind? What fair observer would maintain that institutions rather than the characters of men and women will make life nobler, or that a better world will be only a world of better institutions?

It is a remarkable fact that, although institutions are the instru-

ments sometimes of good, but often of evil, intentions, they are usually made to partake of the *appearance* of goodness alone. Sometimes, therefore, the outward moral aspect is only a disguise for selfish and sinister motives which lie beneath. Hence, if our institutional practices were abandoned, or even if they were stripped of their transcendental symbols and sanction, the evil import of many of our present deeds could no longer be hidden. Those who now profit unjustly through such a system would be forced either to give up their gains or to perform their depredations in the open, subjected both to the light of their own consciences and the disapprobation of their fellows. Shall we be so cynical as to say that the latter is the course which men would always follow? Let us consider those respectable 'Christian' citizens who, through corporate organization, now profit from the unwholesome and perilous toil of unorganized workers in mines, on plantations, or in factories. In the absence of our indirect, institutional methods, would such men have devised direct and personal means for oppressing those who are weaker than themselves, in order to reap a fortune from their toil? If it had been necessary for every soldier killed in the World War to have been killed in a direct hand to hand manner, if not only combat troops in the trenches, but factory employees, munition workers, engineers, war-time financiers, publicists, food administrators, congressmen, and even the President himself had been obliged to take these human lives; not, as they did, through mass methods, military organization, and long range guns, but singly and personally, as man to man,—would that conflict have been the colossal tragedy it was?

Whether our own private actions have been good or evil, we have always insisted that our institutions are righteous. Whence has come this insistence if not from our individual appreciation of those moral qualities themselves, and the yearning of individuals for those values which they call good? And if we could bring ourselves to give up the projection of our virtues upon our institutions, might we not be more likely to fall back upon this sense of rectitude which lies within ourselves. If it is from individuals, ultimately, that institutional sanc-

tions and moral standards come, there is no reason why we cannot make these values direct and personal rather than vicarious and institutional in their operation. Why should we not bring home to individuals the fact that they alone are responsible for the good or for the evil which emerges from their 'institutions'? Need we fear, if we do this, that the cause of virtue will be betrayed? If so, we are in a sorry condition indeed. Far from plunging us into an abyss of selfishness, there is, however, a fair chance that such a course might liberate impulses toward fair and humane conduct which are now restrained. Instead of spelling the ruin of our civilization, this achievement by individuals of insight into their own motives and full responsibility for their own acts might lead to an unfolding of character beyond all precedent in human history. The possibility, at least, of such an outcome seems to me to weigh more heavily than the risk of failure.

### VIII

Without diminishing our respect for the past benefits of our institutional habits let us therefore ask whether the time has not arrived for transferring to ourselves, as individuals, the test of those virtues which we have previously projected upon our institutions. May we not look forward to a time when institutionalism shall so decline that full insight and individual responsibility shall be ours? May we not cease to look for new benefits in organized coöperation, and seek the good life in terms of the self-realization of individuals?

But the reader, in turn, may ask what our guiding criterion for the future will be if the exemplification of ideals through human institutions is to be relinquished. If we are to dispel the 'sanctity of The Law,' the 'divinity of the Canons,' the 'inspired genius of Industry,' and the 'providential guidance of Governments and Nations,' who, or what, shall be our guide in matters spiritual and temporal? It is all very well, the reader may say, to plead for character and self-realization in individuals; but if we are to give up the goal of a world of better institutions, to what end shall we encourage individuals to develop? The answer to this question is simple. The guide and judge in every case must

be the individual himself. The ends implicit in his own life, which can become fully known only through the process of self-expression, are the goals towards which each individual will aspire. In all this freedom and diversity we shall make but one condition, which, however, is as difficult as it is important to fulfill. There must be developed in each individual sufficient altruism, combined with the personal insight necessary to give such altruism expression, so that, while seeking his own self-realization, he will not jeopardize the opportunity of others to pursue the same goal. With the fulfillment of this one requirement, which is the golden rule of the new individualism, no other prescriptions will be necessary. All further regulations and standards will grow out of the needs of individuals themselves; they will arise from the integration of individuals' characters through living and reflecting upon their own experiences. Wisdom and folly, baseness and righteousness, beauty and ugliness, truth and falsehood—all these distinctions will be given their content from the lives of the individuals who are to use them. There will, of course, be a comparing of one's experiences with those of his fellows, and a helpful interchange of viewpoints and evaluations. The recorded experiences of past generations and the laws and customs which men have found useful will be consulted and will be used wherever they fit the present needs of individuals' lives. But this societal heritage will not be preserved or treasured as an end in itself. The conclusions which men reach by sharing their experiences will never be apotheosized into a controlling 'group opinion,' nor organized as institutional patterns sanctioned by a collective authority or a superhuman will. They will serve only as an informal *modus vivendi*, a means of spontaneous fellowship, and a new field in which individuals can find self-cultivation.

Into such a realm of untrammelled freedom we have never yet dared to venture. Many indeed will recoil from the prospect and will prefer the shelter of a societal, rather than an individual, standard. Many may wish to cling to the security of sacrosanct laws, divinely ordained codes, and the salvation promised by our traditional institutional formulas. They may prefer these, hampering as they are, to the pain and uncertainty of

finding their own pathway. Indeed, the search for the new individualism may, at present, be only for the more adventurous. It seems a hope rather than a program for immediate realization, a road to travel rather than the assurance of an accomplished journey. And yet, when men's institutional habits, in helping them to adjust themselves to their material world, have failed to show them how to live with one another, when all their organization and planning are near to shipwreck through their inadequate philosophy, when their conquest of toil has left them unable to enjoy the leisure they have created, when the processes of 'industry' are disjointed, when 'governments' are impotent and 'nations' have proved idols of clay, where else shall men turn if not back upon themselves? In the hour when our confidence in our institutions has betrayed us, can we not find within ourselves, as individuals, some resource hitherto unseen, some philosophy which will set us again, with clearer vision, upon our way?

I, for one, have faith in individuals. I am not deeply impressed by our institutional habits. Institutions have come and gone throughout history. Their form has been colored by the time and place of their development, and by the dominating rulers and the material culture of their age. Some of them have been but sorry attempts at human adjustment. Others have been far-reaching, and have been glorified in symbols so illustrious that they have seemed almost divine. But all, it seems, have run, or are running, their course. Rituals, creeds, laws, churches, nations, and empires have come and gone. In our modern world men have continued increasingly to build within themselves, as the instruments of adjustment, these ever changing patterns of common habits and beliefs. It is the way in which men have lived in the past and are continuing to live today. We have no evidence, however, that it is the way in which men *must* live; there is no proof that institutions are the only methods for living together which men can devise.

Notwithstanding all that may be said for highly organized institutions, may they not belong, perhaps, to an earlier rather than a later period of human existence? Our institutional habits

serve us well for a time; yet at the moment of their greatest use and perfection they reach an elaboration which cancels their usefulness. And social changes, moreover, in so far as they start from these elaborate failures and use them as materials, can never fully master the difficulties they raise. Our organized habits of business and industry bring us a profusion of material goods; but in so doing they create a dangerous impasse in the use of these very benefits and in the freedom of individual action. Habits of national organization have protected individuals and fostered their development in local groups; but they are now threatening to wipe out civilization itself. Practices of institutional religion have given rise to a feeling of emotional security and have endowed ethical standards with a divine sanction; but they have retarded the expression of other vital interests and have upheld the hands of arbitrary rulers. And in spite of the agitation of reformers on all sides, it is not clear how any modification of these great systems of control which stops short of their very dissolution can cure the evils they have brought upon us. Numerous and elaborate institutional patterns, operative where men have not yet learned to live freely and spontaneously together, may be an indication, therefore, not of the progress but of the relative ineptitude of those who employ them. Our extensive systems of mass production, corporate functioning, credit, and money, our elaborate bureaucratic governments, our churches and civic welfare agencies, our schools and colleges, our organized recreational groups and charities—all these may prove not, as some think, that we are near the goal, but that we have hardly started. They may even give rise to the suspicion that we are no longer upon the right track.

Those who hold the view that institutions are our only practicable means of existence will portray the ideals for our future society in a manner very different from that which I am here suggesting. They will probably envisage a society in which the perfect method of devising and running institutions shall have been discovered. They will, of course, argue for a dynamic rather than a static society, for a continual change of institutions to meet the changing needs of men. Nevertheless, such prophets will espouse this ideal of progressive change through the continual readjust-

ment of institutions, as the ultimate human goal. The 'better world' for them will always mean 'a world of better institutions.' There would be, in such a society, a vast number of institutional behaviors. None of these behaviors would be held as rigid and unchangeable; but all would be so carefully tried, and so well geared with one another, that the evolution of the 'Great Society' could proceed toward its goal with a minimum of loss or friction. Though not inflexible, our institutions would represent patterns which are the nearest possible to perfection for the time concerned. 'Cultural lag' would be caught up, and all parts of the social order would run smoothly together. We should not need to be apprehensive about the welfare, the motives, or the standards of individuals; for this dynamic perfection of the social order would provide the necessary ideals, the security of individuals, and the highest possible socialization of their natures. Nor would we need to concern ourselves about the opportunities of individuals for self-expression. To live in a world of continually perfecting institutions would mean, by definition, to live in a world of increasing individual freedom. All men and women, according to this conception, would live fully and happily together; the rule of living would be the fulfillment of the individual through the common welfare of the whole.

Very different from this picture is the future to which a seeker for the newer individualism aspires. For he would regard the millennium of the institutionalists as no millennium at all, except for the officials in charge and for those who had become stupefied by the worship of collective symbols. In his scheme there would not be a vast system of institutional habits; and he would not be so eager to keep such habits running smoothly in society as to eliminate the conflicts which these habits might engender within the personalities of individuals. An individualist's dynamic pattern is not that of the social organism, but of the growing and unfolding personality of an individual. He is not deceived into thinking that we can make institutions, when perfected, the instrument of the individual freedom and self-expression merely by so defining them. He sees the 'whole,' of which institutionalists speak, as some-



thing far too vast and complex to be directed through institutional leadership, without turning it into an over-simplification and a standardization of life itself. An individualist's goal is not the security of the whole so much as the welfare of its parts. His society of the future is one in which we shall not sacrifice to social regimentation our greater need for spontaneous human fellowship nor the insights which come from solitude and reflection. He is not so much concerned that human beings shall work together for an imagined whole as that they shall have room to grow as individuals and to differ from the personalities of their fellows. In his view institutions, while they may be useful for certain purposes, can never enable us to realize the full potentialities of living. A better world can only be a world of better and of freer individuals.

## INDEX

**A**djustment, effortless, value of, 388; family life to new conditions, 310-315; fallacy in adjusting individual to society, 242-245, 336, 337, 345-351, 353; individuals to depression, 292-296; problems, 31, 32

Adler, Alfred, on complex of male superiority, 365

Advertising, social effect, 255-257

Aesthetic values, institutional behavior, 483-485

Aristotle, individualist conception of life, 59, 60

Art, influence of business civilization, 244-247, 257; one of three fundamental forms of experience, 446-449

**B**arrie, J. M., play mentioned, 372

Beethoven, mentioned, 187

Behavior, institutional, definition, 27, 28; human, two classes, 337; integrated vs. segmentalized, 104, 105; predictable, 54-56; predictable, possibilities, 298, 299; predictable, use in social planning, 286-289; social prediction uncertain, 288, 289

Bernard, L. L., quoted, 418

Besant, Annie, mentioned, 372

Booth, Evangeline, mentioned, 372

Boy Scout's Manual, kind of life described, 316, 317

Braintree, Mass., in Sacco-Vanzetti case, 107

Burgess, Ernest W., study of family, 347-349

Business, as adventure, 289-291; benevolence in, 251-255; corporate, nature of, 209; primitive vs. economic adventure, 283-285; two views of institution, 201-208. *See also* Corporation and Industry and Technological advance

**C**ausation, discussion of, 92-95

Chain store movement, effect of, 225, 226

Chamberlain, Sir Austen, mentioned, 184

Chapin, F. S., quoted, 313

Charity, organized, effect, 492

Chase, Stuart, mentioned, 275

Children, concepts of institutions, 343-345; development of whole personality, 322, 332; effect of family ide-

ology, 350; foster child fantasy explained, 344; guidance in training, 323; guidance, principle of unity, 331-335; problem in training girls, 355; rules for teaching institutional habits to, 355-357; influences estranging generations, 307-310; investigations of character, 324-335; peril in adjusting to society, 353; search for integration, 324-335; three periods in conception of social order, 345; subject to diverse relationships, 322-324.

Churches, beginnings, 424, 425; consequences of communal worship, 423-425, 430, 431; consequences of unassailable theology, 429-433; consolidations, significance, 441, 442; future direction, 438-442; institutional thinking, 433; position in social reform, 434-438; significance of multiplication of denominations, 440, 441; stereotypes in religion, 423, 424; technique for maintaining fictions, 125; use of symbols, 431, 433; valid basis for use of symbols, 459-461. *See* Religion

Civic clubs, harmonization of business and benevolence, 253-255

Communication, *face to face* vs. partially inclusive situations, 101, 102

Community, Great, Dewey's concept, 88-90; individualism in, 89, 90; criticism of, 100, 101

Community, local, fundamental social group, 100, 101; relation to Great Community, 101, 102; totally inclusive social group, 97; new life, out of depression, 294, 295

Conflict, through stereotyped action, 210, 211

Control, institutions as instruments of, 8, 9, 25, 26; location, in popular government, 70, 71; over nature, individual loss, 218; use of predictable behavior, 56

Cooley, Charles Horton, on the group and the individual, 336; quoted, 506

Coöperation, in corporations, vs. economic division of effort, 234; human achievement, 197-199; organized, use and peril, 488, 489

Copernicus, mentioned, 428

Corporation, activity in case of shoe-making, 224; behavior of financiers, 231-233; convenience of legal fiction, 225, 232, 233; not subject to correc-

- tion, 235-237; effect on workers, 227-229; friendly service analyzed, 240-242; individual behavior cloaked, 228-230, 238; men enslaved to fiction, 228-230; in operation, parallel to warfare, 230, 231; personified, 219-221; for profit, peril in, 228, 229; what it is vs. what it does, 221-224
- Courts. *See* Law
- Crime, through institutional habits, 76-79
- Crusades, motivation, through symbols, 149
- Culture, as opposed to human nature, criticism, 211, 212, 507-511; identified with national feeling, 186-188. *See* Determinism, cultural, fallacy
- D**arwin, Charles, mentioned, 361, 428
- Depression, adjustment to, 292-296; Explanation, 30, 31; fallacies, in treating institutions only, 34, 35; lessons of, 297; road to recovery, 297, 298; status of individuals in, 280-282
- Determinism, cultural, fallacy, 82-84, 212, 494-498, 510; cultural and economic, criticism, 215
- Dewey, John, concept of the public, 86-91; criticism, 91-105
- Disease, mental, occupational neuroses, 210, 211
- Dunlap, Knight, quoted on women, 368
- E**conomic order. *See* Industry and Technological advance
- Eddy, Mary Baker, mentioned, 372
- Education, influence of business civilization, 244, 245; changes in history teaching recommended, 188-193; as means of cultural change, 84, 85; lack of character fostered, 327, 328; as basis for social melioration, 381, 382; shift of emphasis necessary, 133, 134; evils of departmentalization, 414-416, immediacy, definition, 385-387; immediacy, present and future joined, 402; immediacy in social aspects, 392-394; values in immediacy, summary, 391, 392, 406, 409; process of institutionalizing, 476, 477; to efface institutional habits, 501; need for laboratory training, 409, 410; training for leisure, criticism, 387-392; preparation for living vs. living, 384, 385, 401; scientific basis for preparation theory, 401-409; planning for future adjustment, 397-401; errors in science teaching, 409-411; segmentalized, 314; teacher-pupil relationship, values, 412-415; effect on teachers of loss of immediacy, 414; as training for life, limitations, 417, 418; transfer values, 402-409; examination of transmission theory, 383, 384, 418-420; trends, 267, 268; trend toward vocational emphasis, 389-401; dilemmas in vocational education, 411-413. *See* also Children and Adjustment
- Edwards, Major General, message to Governor Fuller, 131
- Ethics, two types of ethicists, 53; goals of societal and individual, 59, 60; losses through institutionalism, 512-515; societal, change necessary, 133, 134. *See* also Religion
- Expert, place of, in modern life, 281, 282
- F**amily, disorganized status of aged, 318, 319; disruption, 475, 476; basis for future hope, 320, 321; case study, criticism of, 347-349; changed character, 306-310; problems of child rearing, 313-318; content vs. form, 319, 320; ideology, effect on child, 350; legal sense, 339; peril in too much harmony, 352; problems of morality, 354, 355; proposed adjustments to new conditions, 310-315; proposed substitutes, 311-321; two views of, 305, 306. *See* Women and Children
- Fear, in modern life, 216, 217
- Fictions, usefulness and limitations of, 238, 239
- Fighting impulse, explanation, 136, 137
- Fosdick, Harry E., article quoted, 456
- Foster, Sir George, quoted on the Council of the League of Nations, 183
- Fraenkel, Osmund K., work on Sacco-Vanzetti trial, 113
- Freedom, future realm, 515, 517; individual, under capitalism, 200, 249-251; moral, not presupposed in moral society, 60, 61; struggle for, 468-488
- Freemasonry, example of group loyalty, 143
- Fuller, Governor Alvin, in Sacco-Vanzetti case, 108, 131, 132
- G**alileo, mentioned, 428
- Germany, culture and nationalistic allegiance, 187, 188. *See* also Nazi

Goethe, mentioned, 187

Government, popular, American attitude vs. others, 65-67; case of breakdown, 80, 81; crime under, 76-79; dangers in misconceptions, 66, 68, 71-75; divorced from individuals, 67, 68, 78, 474; economic interests, 68, 69; historical view, 486, 487; causes of indifference, 71, 72; partially inclusive of individuals, 73, 74; lack of morality, 73, 74; in a nationless world, 167; reality of, 70, 71; representation in, 72, 73

Grant, Robert, on Sacco-Vanzetti committee, 108

Grant, U. S., mentioned, 190

Groups, importance of alignments, 103, 104; Cooley quoted, criticized, 336; in Dewey's society, criticized, 95, 96; loyalty explained, 143, 144; partial and total inclusion of individuals, 96-99

Groves, E. R., quoted, 352

**H**abits, institutional, 29, 30. *See also* Institutions

Hartshorne, H. *See* Hartshorne and May

Hartshorne and May, investigation of children, discussion, 324-335

Health, mental, endangered in modern family, 314, 315

Hertzler, J. O., quoted, 411, 506

Hindenburg, von, mentioned, 190

Hinkle, Beatrice, quoted, 367

History, institutional emphasis, 258-260

Holmes, Justice Oliver Wendell, in Sacco-Vanzetti case, 108

Hyde Park, mentioned, 280

**I**mmediacy, in education. *See* Education, immediacy

Individuals, conditions for complete expression, 58; how lost in popular government, 67-70; future self-realization, 499-505; extent of freedom under capitalism, 249-251; changes in "human nature," 504, 505; individuals, in corporations, 238; status in the depression, 280-282; economics between, 206-209; loss of control of economic basis, 291, 292; as fundamental realities, 202, 203; analogy of funnel, 242-260; as parts of institutional pattern, 41-44; no complete absorption in institutions, 44; not organizable as wholes, ix, x; lost in organized society, 281, 489; neglect

of, 80; thwarted by partially inclusive group, 102; attitude toward war, 150

Industry, organized, effects, 200-203, 474, 475; effect on family, 354; implications, 203-206; individual point of view, 206-209

Institutions, abandonment impossible, 215, 216; as means of adjustment, 46, 47; aesthetic values, 483-485; American institution worship, 65-67; analogy of funnel, 242-260; appraisal, 471, 472; two approaches to study of, 7-10, 23, 24; argument, pro and con, 41, 42, 493-498; 517-520; individual behavior cloaked, 124, 132, 133; reinterpreted as behavior, vii; business, two views, 201-208; changes proposed, 498-502; children's concepts of, 343-345; conceived as explicit, personified, 478, 479; dangers of denoting explicitly, 18-20; usefulness of the concept, 14, 15; experiment in children's knowledge of, 339-342; rules for teaching institutional habits to children, 355-357; as cloaks of evils, 514, 515; dangers, ix, 49, 50; effect of extreme development, 216; arguments in defense, 479-485; defense reactions to attack, 129; fundamentalist defense of, 130-132; ethical losses, 512-515; definitions of experts, 10-12; emphasis on common traits of individuals, 202; emphasis upon interests, 36, 37; explicit and implicit observations, 26, 27; reasons for fostering fictions, 125; uses and dangers of fictions, 482, 483; struggle for freedom from, 487; historical changes, 485-490; varying emphasis throughout history, 258-260; divorced from individuals, 46, 129-132, 214, 215; leadership, 31; meaning, 12-14; meaning, example of university, 4-7; nature of, 134, 505-507; misconceptions, 3, 4, 11, 12; necessary to combat dangerous minorities, 512; organization, evil in, 201; peril in existence of, 49; sanction to slaughter, 211; ultimate reality, 20, 21; superstitions in social order, 119-122

**J**ames, William, quoted, 461

Jefferson, Thomas, and popular government, 68

Jenness, Arthur, experiment in children's knowledge of institutions, 339-342

Jesus, example of act of complete self-expression, 405, 406  
 Judd, C. H., illustration cited, 206.  
 Justice, institutional, 115-119. *See also* Law and Sacco-Vanzetti case

**K**ant, in German culture, mentioned, 187

Kiwanis, harmonization of benevolence and business, 253, 254

**L**abor, under corporation control, 227, 228

Laski, Harold J., quoted on political indifference, 65, 66

Law, methods of enactment, 72; Common, static, 480; courts upheld as infallible, 126-129; danger in symbolizing, 482, 483; definition, 121; causes for disregard for, 72; evasion of, 73; technique for maintaining fictions, 124, 125; inflexible process, not a safeguard, 128, 129; social, not precise, 91, 92. *See also* Sacco-Vanzetti case

Lawrence, Bishop William, message to Governor Fuller, 131, 132

Leadership, buttressed by institutional fictions, 31, 35-39; danger to effectiveness, 38; lip-service to institutions, 124, 125

Lee, Robert E., mentioned, 190

Legislation, social, effect, 492, 493

Leisure, biological vs. technological, 276-278; criterion for employment, 394-397; destruction of materials for, 266-269; education for biological form of, 388; era of, easily upset, 275; in future machine age, 261, 262; two theories of, 263-266; technological, perils of, 265-267; technological, problem of motive, 269; of interest, 273-275; technological, unnecessary and dangerous to culture, 296

Lewis, Sinclair, mention of Babbitt as example, 266; mention of Arrow-smith, 463

Lincoln, Abraham, mentioned, 190

Lindbergh, Charles A., mentioned, 249

Loyalty, analysis of, 164, 165; institutional, perils of, 39; public and private, conflict, 74-76. *See also* Symbols

Lowell, Abbott Lawrence, on Sacco-Vanzetti committee, 108

**M**achines, vs. handicraft, 389-392; operated by corporate activity, 231. *See also* Technological advance

McConnell, Francis J., on conditions in steel industry, 437

*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, quoted, 51, 52

Marion, North Carolina, labor conflicts in, 437

Marriage, estranging influences, 306, 307; trial and companionate, 311, 312

Martin, Everett Dean, on group loyalty, 143

May, M. *See* Hartshorne and May

Meckel, on variability of women, 360, 361

Medeiros, Celestine, mentioned, 117, n.4

Methodist Episcopal Church, quoted on morals, 432; on pacifism, 435; mentioned, 437.

Militarism, implanted in childhood, 189, 190. *See also* War and Symbols and Nation

Münsterberg, Hugo, on "female mind," 362

**N**ation, boundaries, psychology of, 161-164; conditions for abolishing concept of, 171-174; how determined, 138-140; emotional habits toward, 142; effect of fallacious concept on culture, 188; fictional and real, 159, 160; attitude toward individuals abroad, 145, 146; no instinct of patriotism, 172, 173; offenses against, nature of, 147, 148; origin of nationalistic fallacy, 178, 179; peril in ideal of, 152, 153; popular and scientific conceptions, 138-145; purpose and nature of organization, 157-161; realistic view of, 139, 140; hidden causes of war, 150-152

Nazi youth, as example, 279, 280

**O**'Sheel, Shaemas, quotation, 106

**P**acifism, basis for, 160, 161, 213, 214; probable basis for future peace, 172; position of churches, 434, 435; fallacy of world concert of nations, 163, 164; patriotic, 153, 156; errors, patriotic pacifism, 156-166; world wide, 166, 167. *See* War

Parent-Teachers Association, mentioned, 314

Patriotism, examination of arguments, 181-191; changed, for future, 178-193; psychological components, 176-178; conditioned responses, 140, 141;

- origin of objective form of, 178, 179; fallacy of world wide, 164-166; of future, summary, 191, 192
- Pavlov, conditioned responses, 140
- Peace. *See* Pacifism
- Pershing, General J. J., mentioned, 190
- Philosophy. *See* Religion
- Pillsbury, W. B., on nationality, 138
- Pioneer Youth Clubs, work of, 315, 316
- Planning, social, arguments of exponents, 282; central problem, 282-284; problems, 279-301; place of expert, 281, 282; futility of, 489-493; individuality in, 57; methods proposed, 285-292; practical value, 480, 481; worn out tools for, 285
- Plato, societal ethicist, 59
- Poincaré, Henri, on life values, 447, 448
- Politics, institutional loyalty, 25, 26. *See* also Government and Justice
- Proctor, Capt., policeman in Sacco-Vanzetti case, 109.
- Production, primitive, 283
- Progress, method of, 485, 486
- Public, Dewey's concept, 86-91; Dewey's definition criticized, 99, 105
- Purpose, institutions as means of adjustment, 46, 47; necessary concept as approach to institutions, 21-23; in defining institutions, 35; difference between individual and institutional, 45
- R**acketeering, through institutional habits, 76, 77, 79
- Radicalism, institutional treatment of, 36, 37. *See* Sacco-Vanzetti case
- Red Cross, for international aid, 162
- Representation, in government. *See* Government
- Religion, affected by business civilization, 244, 245, 254, 255, 257; basis of conflict with science, 428, 429; subjective basis ignored, 427, 428; conceptions of deity, 423-426, 456-464; disparagement of art and science, 454-458; guidance for child-training, 353, 354; one of three fundamental forms of experience, 446-449; and infantilism, 427, 428; effect of institutionalism, 426-428, 477; personal and institutional, 423, 425, 426; necessity for institutional reconstruction, 466-468; personal experience of author, 465, 466; Protestant revolt, significance, 487; revealed, criticism, 465; science, and religion, Ch. XXI., 443-468; science, actual conflict indicated, 444, 445; attempt at reconciliation a mistake, 445, 446; religion and science, human urges but erroneous systems, 446; valid basis for use of symbols, 459-461; use of symbols, 431, 433; two views, 454-456. *See* Churches
- Rotary, harmonization of benevolence and business, 283, 284
- S**acco-Vanzetti case, analysis, 115-119, 122-124; problem involved, 114, 115; review of circumstances, 107-113; explanation of outcome, 122-135
- Samaritan, Good, example of integrated behavior, 333
- Science, influence of business civilization, 244, 245, 247-249, 257; causation an illusion, 450; era of leisure, 270, 271; one of three fundamental forms of experience, 446-449; as guide to life, criticism, 449-453; present day mechanics not science, 270, 271. *See* Education and Religion and Technological advance
- Schools, as institutional habits, 381-383. *See* also Education
- Sex, training children, 355, 356; differences. *See* Women
- Social intercourse, decline, 268, 269; in the era of leisure, 272
- Society, change of ethics necessary, 133, 134; complexity harmful, 81, 82; converted to Great Community, 88, 89; existence of forces questioned, 120-122; fallacy of adjusting individuals to, 336, 337; individuals lost in organization, 281; institutional, partially inclusive to individuals, 52, 53; fallacy of treating only institutions, 33-35; maladjustment and regulation, 489-493; need for understanding organization of, 29-32; perfected, as goal of ethics, 59, 60; as super-human reality, 32, 33
- Soule, George, on adjustment to depression, 292-294
- Sovereignty, conditions for abolishing concept, 171-174; criticism of monism, 182
- Spinoza, mentioned, 457
- State, definition, 121. *See* Patriotism and Nation
- Stone, Justice, in Sacco-Vanzetti case, 108
- Stratton, George M., quoted on nationality, 186
- Stratton, Samuel W., on Sacco-Vanzetti committee, 108

Summerall, Major General C. P., on fighting for nation, 153  
 Superstition, in religious training, 443  
 Symbols, use in churches, 431, 433; in religion, valid basis for, 459-461; in evoking hate, 148, 149; in evoking patriotism, 140-142, 147; militaristic, 189

**T**eacher-pupil relationship, values, 412-415; effect of loss of immediacy, 414

Technological advance, place of corporations, 234, 235; dependent upon cooperative habits, 197-199, 212; human loss, 473-479; machine vs. handicraft, 389-392; indication, 497, 498; two theories of leisure, 263-266; summary of perils, 217, 218, 275, 276; problems, 199, 200

Teleology. *See* Purpose

Thayer, Judge Webster, institutional justice administered, 107-113; nature of criticism of committee, 123, 124

Theology, consequences of unassailability, 429-433. *See* also Religion

Traditions, definition, 5; in nationalism, 173, 174. *See* also Government, Institutions, Loyalty, Religion, Symbols, and War

Traits, nature of, 324-331

**V**anzetti, Bartolomeo, case reviewed, 107-113. *See* also Sacco-Vanzetti case

Vestris, foundering of, example of institutional behavior, 51, 52

Vocational guidance, problem, 411, 412. *See* Education

**W**ar, behavior leading to, 145; hidden causes, 150-152; problem of guilt, 148; modern, new significance, 213, 214; motivation, 137, 138, 148; nationalistic fallacy as cause, 136-154; elimination of nationalism necessary, 166; patriotic pacifists, arguments of, 155, 156. *See* Pacifism

Watson, Dr. John B., difference in terminology, 16, n.2

Wells, H. G., mentioned, 468; conception of God mentioned, 177

Whitehead, A. N., mentioned, 457

Women, civic and church status, 371, 372; significance of chastity ideal, 368; double standard explained, 368-370; explanation of "higher character," 367; differences in training girls and boys, 355, 361, 363; possibility of equality, 375-377; problem of sex differences, 358-363; similarity of traits to men's, 360; variability theory questioned, 350, 351; handicapped in business, 374, 375; handicapped in public office, 347; protection against moral evils, fallacy of, 369, 370; complex of male superiority, 365-367; vested sex-interest of men, 367, 368; new rôle in abandoning institutions, 501, 502; stereotyped view of, 358, 359; stereotype concerning intelligence, 360; result of wishful thinking, 364-370; stereotyped view significance, 370, 371

Wright brothers, experimenters, mentioned, 249

**Y**outh Clubs, Pioneer, 315, 316  
 Youth Movement, German, 315, 316

